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# ON THE FRONTIER AND BEYOND

A RECORD OF THIRTY YEARS' SERVICE

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## PREFACE

It has been my fate, during almost the whole of my thirty years' service under the Government of India, to be stationed on or beyond the Indian frontiers. In fact, during that period I have never, except perhaps for a few weeks at a time, served at an ordinary "plains station"; and for twenty-three out of the thirty years my duties lay in countries actually beyond the frontiers.

I began at Darjeeling, decidedly an outpost of the Indian Empire; then, after serving in the North-West Frontier Campaigns of 1897-8, I lived for a year at a trans-Indus station in what is now the North-West Frontier Province. Thence I was sent to the Gilgit District in the State of Kashmir, where I sometimes lived for months at a time without seeing or speaking to a white man. And this (except for a year at the headquarters of the Government of India in 1920) finished my service in India proper or its dependencies. The remaining twenty-three years, until I retired in 1925, were spent in Tibet, Persia, and Nepal, with brief interludes of leave home and a few months in Siberia during the war.

And most of my posts were lonely and isolated. At Gyantse, in Tibet, I was perched at an elevation of some 13,000 ft., 100 miles beyond the main axis of the Himalayas, and some 250 miles from a railway station, and my only companion for the first year was the Medical Officer attached to the post. Then at Seistan, in Persia, there were two other Europeans—the Medical Officer and the manager of the local branch of the Imperial Bank

of Persia—and we were separated from the nearest railway station at Nushki by some 450 miles of desert. At Shiraz, in the province of Fars, we had a comparatively large European community—ten or twelve all told—and our nearest link with the outside world was at Bushire, on the coast of the Persian Gulf, some 120 miles distant over a most villainous road, where one took ship to Bombay. And finally Katmandu, although only 75 miles from rail-head, was in some respects the most secluded and isolated of all, as access to it is forbidden to any European without the express authority of the Government of Nepal, and the road to and from the plains of India, at all times difficult, is at certain seasons of the year practically impassable.

But in stating these facts I am not lamenting or bemoaning my lot. Far from it. I loved the wild places and the solitude and the opportunities for sport and adventure. And throughout I had three chief sources of mental or physical refreshment and stimulation: first, in the work—official and unofficial—in connection with these posts, which, as I think will be apparent from these reminiscences, was lacking neither in interest nor in variety. Secondly, in books, which have been my unfailing friends through life. And last, but not least, in sport of all kinds and descriptions.

In publishing these reminiscences I do not for a moment wish to claim that my experiences, such as they were, have been of an exceptional character. There are Officers of the Indian Foreign Department, some still serving and others only recently retired, who have had far wider experiences and more exciting adventures than have fallen to my lot. My object is merely to try to give an idea of the scope and interest of the work which devolves on the Officers of this Department on and beyond the frontiers of India; and in this I hope that I may to some extent have succeeded. And to the younger

generation of Political Officers, and to aspirants for service in this Department, I would add that I do not by any means write as a *laudator temporis acti*—on the contrary, whatever may be the drawbacks of service in India itself nowadays, the life on and beyond the frontiers is as interesting as ever it was, and presents as much scope for initiative, and for an enterprising and adventurous spirit.

History, of course, cannot repeat itself, and circumstances and conditions will differ in every case. It is unlikely, for instance, that it will ever again fall to the lot of a young Political Officer to take part in so dramatic and striking a ceremony as the signature of our Treaty with the Tibetans in the Potala Palace at Lhasa, or to be blown up in the assault of a Tibetan fort, or to accompany a Reincarnation of Buddha on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist shrines in India and to introduce him to the Heir to the Throne; and I sincerely trust that it may never again be the fate of a British Officer to be imprisoned in a mud fort off the coast of the Persian Gulf during the hot weather, or to have to stand by helpless while his loyal staff are being murdered one by one in cold blood within rifle-shot of his Consulate. And as to Nepal, I can only hope that the Treaty of Friendship, which it was my good fortune to sign with the late Prime Minister of that gallant and friendly little country, may serve its purpose as well, and last as long (upwards of a century) as did its predecessor. And as far as geographical mysteries are concerned, my friend, Colonel F. M. Bailey, has been inconsiderate enough to solve most of those which remained in the vicinity of the Indian frontiers until within a few years ago; nor, I think, will his amazing adventures amongst the Bolsheviks during the war be easily emulated. Whilst for sheer drama it would be difficult to rival the experiences of the European community at Kabul when, little more than a

year ago, they had to be rescued by aeroplane from the beleaguered city.

But it is a true saying that adventures are for the adventurous, and innumerable opportunities and openings still exist for those who know how to find them. Asia has not yet settled down into the idyllic conditions of the millennium, and there are many useful rôles waiting to be filled by the right men. Many thorny frontier problems remain to be handled, and in the intervals of more serious work there is always sport to be had.

So I wish "God-speed" to all pioneers and workers on the outskirts of the Indian Empire. My humble share is finished and done with, and all I can say in conclusion is that I believe that no finer life and profession exist for a man of sound physique, and active mind and body, and a taste for languages. He will have to put up with solitude very often, and to endure at times extremes of heat and cold, and even to run bodily risks. But he will find himself in the thick of real, live politics—that is, history in the making, not "politics" as they are known in England, where the word connotes party intrigues, and personal struggles for office, and manoeuvres in the House of Commons. He will have to shoulder heavy responsibilities while still young, and he will have opportunities for enjoying the finest sport in the world. In fact, he will have to take the rough with the smooth; but he will find scope for all his faculties, and, whatever the result may be, he will in the end have lived a man's life.

W. F. O'CONNOR.

*January 1931.*

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## CHAPTER I

### EARLY YEARS IN INDIA

(1895-1902)

AFTER five very pleasant but somewhat expensive years in the Royal Field Artillery in England, I arrived at Bombay towards the end of February 1895, *en route* to join No. 9 British Mountain Battery at Darjeeling.

It was a curious chance that sent me to that particular station, and one which has affected my whole life ever since. I knew next to nothing about India, but I was heartily tired of garrison life at home; and believing that my best chance of seeing some active service was by joining a Mountain Battery, I had applied for one and been posted accordingly. I remember looking up Darjeeling on the map before leaving home, and noting its proximity to the Tibetan frontier, and wondering whether I should ever be able to cross the frontier and to see Lhasa and the curious ring-shaped lake, Yamdok Tso, marked with dotted lines on the map. (Most of the topographical detail of Tibet was indicated by dotted lines in those days.) I little thought that within ten years it would have been my lot to camp on the shores of the Yamdok Tso, to read aloud a treaty in their own language to the assembled Tibetan delegates in the Potala Palace at Lhasa, and to find myself established as the first British Agent in Tibet!

Darjeeling had little to recommend it as a military station. There was no frontier problem—at any rate at that time—offering chances of service and distinction to

a soldier; the rains made any practical military work impossible during the greater part of the year; and we found that it was extremely difficult to keep our mules fit and hardy. Even for an officer, life in most of the Himalayan hill stations is a pretty dull affair (except perhaps for the professional society man), and Darjeeling is no exception. During the rains there is no sport of any kind, and even in the cold weather there is very little shooting in the hills. But I soon discovered some excellent shooting grounds in the forests which lie along the foot of the hills, and during the two years that I spent at Darjeeling I took full advantage of this, and used to run down and camp in the jungle whenever I could get a few days' leave; and here I shot my first tiger, bison, sambur, and cheetal. And bison stalking on foot is perhaps the finest sport I have ever enjoyed.

But all this is by the way—my true interests lay elsewhere. From the moment of my arrival at Darjeeling and the first view of the snows, I became obsessed and fascinated with the romance and beauty of the whole of this frontier. It made an irresistible appeal to my imagination. The view from Darjeeling is too well known to need description, and in all my experience in many countries all over the world I have never found anything to equal it.

I had the good fortune to live in a little bungalow perched on the very summit of the Darjeeling spur, at 8,000 ft. elevation, where I had an uninterrupted view of Kinchinjunga and the whole panorama of snowy peaks which defines the northern frontier of Sikkim. From here one looks across the vast ravine of the Rungeet river, flowing 7,000 ft. below, to the dark forest-clad hills of Sikkim, rising range after range to the giant mass of Kinchinjunga and his majestic neighbours; and when I turned round and looked south I could see the plains of India stretching away into the illimitable distance, dappled

with light and shade, and streaked here and there with the silver threads of rivers. It was a wonderful and a glorious sight, and one to strike the senses and fire the most prosaic imagination.

But apart altogether from the physical beauty of the scenery, my mind was captivated by the glamour of the unknown—by the knowledge that beyond that snowy barrier lay an almost entirely unexplored country, inhabited by a strange race about which we knew next to nothing. I felt that I should never be happy till I had crossed the mountains and solved some of the mysteries which lay beyond. Almost from the day of my arrival at Darjeeling I set to work to learn all I could about Tibet. I devoured every book on the subject that I could lay my hands on (and even then there were a good many), and I set resolutely to work to learn the language.

From the first I made up my mind to have nothing to do with any of the local semi-Tibetan *patois* as spoken in Sikkim, Bhutan, etc., but to concentrate on the pure Lhasa dialect. I had by that time learnt enough of the recent history of the frontier to surmise the possibility of the Tibetan question again coming to the fore sooner or later, and I determined to be ready for the occasion when it did arrive. But it was uphill work. Darjeeling, it is true, was full of Tibetans, but they were, almost without exception, persons of the lowest class—paupers and loafers, and criminals who had crossed the frontier to escape the hands of justice—and although they could talk their own language with fluency and point, they were useless as teachers.

Books, too, presented a difficulty. The only book which at that time made any attempt to teach the colloquial, as contrasted with the written or classical language, was Graham Sandberg's Grammar. I owe much to this book, which gave me my first grounding, and which presented at any rate a sketch of the grammar and syn-



tax; but it was not reliable where the Lhasa dialect was concerned, and had many limitations and shortcomings, and I soon had to abandon it. Other existing grammars in those days were those of Csoma de Koros and Jaesche—both too much concerned with the written language to be of much practical value to a student of the spoken tongue, although the former is a veritable mine of information which even to the present day is to be found nowhere else. Now, of course, the student has Sir Charles Bell's admirable "Handbook of Colloquial Tibetan," an exhaustive and accurate treatise on the pure colloquial.

However, I did my best with such books and teachers as I could find, and began to be able to express myself and to understand what was said to me pretty well. I engaged a cheery scoundrel, fresh from Lhasa, as a servant, who was dirty, lazy, unpunctual, and of very doubtful honesty. But he was always good tempered and chatty, and at the end of a year, although what was left of my wardrobe was almost unpresentable, and I had endured every kind of minor discomfort at his hands, I had acquired a pretty fluent flow of the real vernacular, which (as in other languages), when once absorbed, is never again wholly lost, and which served as a basis for more serious studies later.

Besides learning Tibetan during my two years at Darjeeling I made several excursions into Sikkim, and undertook a systematic exploration of the whole of that most charming and beautiful little country. Sikkim is so well known from the number of excellent books on the country (from Hooker's immortal "Himalayan Journals" to Lord Ronaldshay's "Lands of the Thunderbolt" published in 1923) that I shall not attempt any description of it here. But after a pretty extensive acquaintance with Himalayan scenery I can safely say that Sikkim, for compact and varied beauty, is unique. In the small

area enclosed by its frontiers (only some 8,000 square miles altogether) it comprises every kind of exquisite scenery—from the rank tropical luxuriance of the lower valleys to the magnificence of its great snowy peaks, of which there are no fewer than fourteen, all over 20,000 ft., on its northern borders. And besides this, there is the charm and variety of its inhabitants—the little, shy, gentle, aboriginal Lepches of the south and centre (although in the south especially they have been almost entirely superseded by the more practical and vigorous Nepalis), the tall, sturdy Bhutias (the generic term for cis-Himalayan people of Tibetan origin) of the north, and the numerous tribes and castes from Nepal.

At this time Mr. Claude White was the Political Officer of Sikkim. Mr. White, originally of the Public Works Department, was employed with the Sikkim Expeditionary Force of 1888, and was afterwards appointed Political Officer of the country as being a practical engineer, just the man to open up an almost trackless country. At the time when I first knew him, 1895, he had been for some seven years in Sikkim, and during that period had accomplished a great deal of good work by the construction of roads and bridges and rest-houses, and by general developments of an administrative character. He was a well-known figure on that frontier then and for many years later—a tall, handsome man, very simple in his habits, and much beloved by all the primitive folk of Sikkim, to whom he was a second father.

My first trip was taken with him in the autumn of 1895. We explored the mountain range bounding Sikkim on the east and separating it from the Chumbi valley, and we crossed a previously unexplored pass (the Beurm La) over the range between the Lachung and Lachen valleys. This little trip gave me my first glimpse of real mountain scenery close at hand, and was also an interesting revelation regarding the nature of the native tracks

which were still at that time the only means of approach to Lachen and Lachung.

In the following autumn I was lucky enough to get three months' leave, and I undertook a somewhat more ambitious expedition on my own account. Accompanied by my friend, Mr. A. E. Clarke, a Master at St Paul's School at Darjeeling, I crossed from Tangu in the Lachen valley into the north-west corner of Sikkim, known as Lhonak. Here we were almost due north of Kinchinjunga and practically surrounded by a number of snowy peaks all over 20,000 ft—a most wonderful mountain panorama, which has been well described by Mr. Douglas Freshfield (in his book "Round Kinchinjunga"), who followed me here some years later. My chief object, however, was to get a view of, and if possible to penetrate into, Tibet, and this we succeeded in doing by crossing the Chorten Nima pass, whose position was roughly indicated on the Survey of India map, but which had not been previously explored. We found the pass with some little difficulty, and from its summit (which I calculated by hypsometer to be 18,500 ft.) I obtained my first view into Tibet—and a very striking and impressive view it was.

The first glimpse was like the landscape of a dream—some strange goblin country—a fantastic and faery scene: so great was the contrast to the cis-Himalayan scenery. Behind me lay Sikkim, with its deeply eroded valleys and verdure-clad hills, a land of heavy rains, running water, and superabundant vegetation. Before me, beyond the crest line of the Himalayas on which I was standing, lay a totally different country: vast, bare, arid plains, broken by irregular mountain masses and hills, and bounded to the north by another great mountain chain. The general colour scheme was brown and yellow, with red and grey rocks and sands showing up here and there. Over all a deep blue sky with an occasional cloud

mass floating in it and throwing its shadow on the plain below. Like all Tibetan landscapes, this one abounded in weird fantastic shapes and pinnacles like the bizarre fancies of one of Doré's pictures. It was to be my lot to live some years of my life amidst such scenery (and for three months on the very plain over which I was looking), but it never lost its fascination for me, and the glamour of that first view of Tibet is with me still.

We gazed our fill, and took observations, and returned to camp that evening; and on the following morning we set out with our little caravan (a dozen coolies or so) to cross into Tibet. There was a small glacier on the northern side of the pass, which was a little difficult, but we all scrambled down safely and camped that night in the river-bed near a deserted hermitage by the shrine (Chorten) after which the pass is named. The next three days we spent moving cautiously along the frontier towards the north and north-east, mapping and making observations as we went, and keeping hidden as well as we could on the mountain-slopes. The most noticeable feature of the landscape here was the contrast between the slopes of the mountains on the north and on the south of the Himalayan main chain. On the southern or Sikkim side the great peaks descend in vast precipices, constantly wreathed in mist and subject to a very heavy rain and snowfall; whereas the northern slopes are gentle and the snow-level is some 2,000 ft. higher than on the south, and the humidity insignificant in comparison.

After three days' wandering we suddenly came upon some shepherds, who, after trying to stop us by force (we had a free fight with them with fists, sticks, and stones), went off to give information to the nearest magistrate, or Jongpen, at Kamba Jong, a few miles away. We knew that our little game was up, and hastily retreated into Sikkim over the regular route *viâ* Giaogong. It was a long weary trek, during which two of our coolies died

of exhaustion, and we only just escaped in time, as from the summit of the pass we saw the Jongpen's forces, foot and horse, scurrying across the plain in pursuit. It came on to snow heavily soon after we had crossed the Sebu pass into what was properly Sikkim territory, but which was at that time claimed by the Tibetans, and it was the merest chance that brought us to a yak-herd's camp near Giaogong just at nightfall. Here we were hospitably received and fed, and we spent the night in the nomad's tent. We woke up next morning to all the pain and discomfort of snow-blindness, and we pursued our journey mounted on yaks lent to us by our good-natured host as far as the first inhabited spot in Sikkim, the little hamlet of Tangu, some ten miles farther on. Here I spent the remainder of my leave shooting burhel.

It was an amusing little adventure, and the information then acquired proved useful later on when the Mission crossed to Kamba Jong by this same route.

I eventually got well rapped over the knuckles for crossing the frontier without leave, and was called up to be reprimanded by Brigadier-General Yeatman Biggs, the very charming General Officer Commanding the Presidency District, in whose command we were. After reminding me of the serious international complications liable to be occasioned by apparently trivial frontier incidents, he relaxed into a smile, and the immediate result was that I was telegraphed for to go to Simla to work in the old "Intelligence Branch" of the Quartermaster-General's Department in Army Headquarters. Here I found myself set to the congenial task of compiling the Sikkim "Route Book," under the immediate supervision of Colonel Hamilton Bower, who had made a remarkable journey across Tibet from west to east, from Ladak to China, a few years before. I had scarcely settled down to work in the Headquarters Offices, however, when the frontier troubles of 1897 began. My restless spirit could

not endure the notion of sitting in an office at Simla while all the frontier was ablaze, and after much solicitation, and with the help of my friend, Mr. Howard Hensman, the Simla correspondent of "The Pioneer," I obtained leave to proceed to the Malakand as "Pioneer" correspondent.

I arrived at Malakand pass at the end of July 1897, too late for the actual siege of the pass. The tribesmen had only been driven off a few days before, and the hills round about were still littered with their corpses. The heat was terrific, and numerous cases of sunstroke occurred amongst the troops, who had been hurriedly pushed up to reinforce the Malakand garrison, and dozens of men were prostrated with sunstroke at Dargai<sup>1</sup> at the foot of the pass. Almost immediately after my arrival a column of troops of all arms started to advance up the Swat valley under General Sir Bindon Blood. I was attached temporarily to No. 2 Indian Mountain Battery and was present at the skirmish at Landakai. It was here that I saw the only Dervish charge of my experience. The battery was climbing the Landakai Ridge with the guns loaded up on the mules, when a small band of eight or ten fanatics suddenly appeared from behind some boulders a few yards away, and made a rush at us, sword in hand, and calling on the name of Allah. They were all shot down by the small infantry escort accompanying us before they could do any damage. On the top of the ridge we came into action against the retreating enemy, and we had a bird's-eye view of the gallant but abortive charge which resulted in the death of two British officers, and earned the V.C. for Viscount Fincastle.

Shortly after this, my own battery was ordered up from Darjeeling to the Kurrum. I joined them at Ambala, and we proceeded to Kohat and Thangu, where

<sup>1</sup> This Dargai is not to be confused with the Dargai on the Samana Range, where two actions took place later in the campaign.

we found ourselves posted to the 1st Division of the Tirah Expeditionary Force, under my old friend General Yeatman Biggs. The battery took part in both the battles at Dargai, at the first of which Piper Findlater, of the Gordon Highlanders, continued to play his pipes whilst lying on the ground severely wounded during the attack, for which he was afterwards awarded the V.C. We had a fine gallery position on the ridge opposite the Dargai spur, whence we shelled the enemy, and were able to watch every detail of the drama as it unfolded itself before our eyes. Thence we moved on with the Expeditionary Force into the Afridi country, taking part in the storming of the two passes (Arhanga and Sanpagha), which had to be crossed on the way, and both of which were stoutly defended by the tribesmen. The force then camped at Maidan, in the heart of the Afridi country, and there we remained for some three months, whilst negotiations were in process.

Maidan is an open valley surrounded by hills and intersected by deep ravines. The tribesmen had deserted their towns and villages on our arrival, and with their families and flocks and herds had retreated into the mountains, where they lay hidden in caves and forests, and whence the fighting men crept out every night to snipe our camp with long-range fire. Small columns were sent out daily to collect fodder and provisions, and to undertake minor punitive operations and surveys. These afforded us some excitement and amusement, as the column was invariably harassed by the tribesmen on its return journey to camp, and we all became expert at the tactics of retirement—a training which stood us in good stead a little later during the withdrawal down the Bara valley. More than once foragers or rear-guards were cut off by the tribesmen during these retreats, and on one occasion a small party of infantry, endeavouring to retire down one of the ravines, was surprised by the enemy and shot down to a

man. We came upon their bodies on the following day, stripped and mutilated.

It was here that I first made the acquaintance of the leader of the recent Mount Everest Expedition, Captain the Hon. C. G. Bruce, as he was then, who with Captain Lucas, also of the 5th Ghurka Rifles, was making the first experiment with scouts in actual warfare; and I was much impressed by Bruce's splendid personality and physique, and the mutual affection and confidence which existed between him and his cheery little men.

As an outlet to my superfluous energy, and in order to try and learn something of scouting tactics, I used sometimes to get leave to accompany him when my battery was remaining in camp; and I enjoyed some delightful days on the hills, stalking the wily Pathan on his own ground, and picking up all I could about hillcraft from Bruce and his men. The gentlemen who amused themselves at night by sniping into our camp were in the habit of retiring leisurely to the hills surrounding the Maidan valley just before daybreak, so the scouts used to start a couple of hours earlier and proceed silently in single file in pitch darkness to a likely hill-top overlooking the valley, and as day broke some of the tribesmen would generally be seen climbing the slopes to take shelter in the woods on the far side. A judicious stalk (precisely as one stalks an ibex or markhor ascending the hillside from his grazing grounds below in the early morning) would place a few scouts on the enemy's path, and a volley at close range often produced a satisfactory bag.

All day the scouts would lie along the crest of the hills, guarding the camp against unexpected attack or long-range snipers, but the tribesmen's chances of getting even with them came when the time arrived for getting back to camp in the evening. One by one the men would "trickle" back from the crest, and run down to some



sheltered spot below, until only perhaps half a dozen or so were left, who fired an occasional perfunctory shot just to show that someone was still there. Then on a signal from Bruce we would all take to our heels and scuttle down the hill as fast as we could, and generally before we were out of range we would have a few bullets whizzing overhead. It was all splendid training, and to me most instructive and interesting as being something quite outside my ordinary work and experiences as a subaltern in a Mountain Battery.

By November an arrangement had been patched up with the tribes, and the force proceeded to retire to Peshawar *viâ* the Bara valley. The first march through the Dwatoi defile went well, but the next few days, during our retirement down the Bara valley, we were constantly harassed by the tribesmen. The only route lay down the bed of the stream which flowed in a narrow gorge, with steep hills on either side. Flank-guards on the hills and a rear-guard in the valley protected the column as well as possible as it moved slowly along, but the tribesmen, all wonderful mountaineers, were ceaseless in their activities; either singly or in small groups they sniped at us from every rock, and every now and again they would swoop down and cut off stragglers or straying mules and ponies. Some of the wretched Indian followers, completely exhausted by cold and fatigue, and terrified by their unwonted surroundings, would wrap themselves in their "chaddars" (shawls) and throw themselves down on the ground, refusing to move, and in cases where it was not possible to compel them to do so, they were immediately hacked to pieces by the tribesmen as the column retired. We emerged eventually into the Peshawar valley, somewhat exhausted by the rigours of the campaign, but all extremely fit, and experts, at any rate, at conducting a retirement in mountainous country. It was a strenuous little campaign while it lasted, and

like all these small Indian frontier expeditions, gave free scope to the development of individuality and initiative.

The frontier had now settled down again into its normal state of unstable tranquillity, and I applied for and was posted to an Indian Mountain Battery (No. 6 Bombay, as it was then designated) in the Tochi valley. Shortly afterwards I developed jaundice, probably as a result of the exposure and hardships of Tirah, and was given six months' sick leave. As soon as I was able to move I went straight up to Kashmir, spent three days at Srinagar fitting myself out, and crossed the Zogi La into Baltistan in heavy snow early in April. I spent the next three months wandering about and shooting in Baltistan and Ladak, and then made my way to Simla across-country from Leh—about a three weeks' trek—*viâ* Lahaul, Kulu, etc., passing through varied and very beautiful scenery. This is a trip, modified according to taste and circumstances, which I can strongly recommend to any young man in India who prefers sport and an open-air life to the ordinary existence of a hill-station. One learns the elements of stalking from real experts—the Kashmiri shikari, with all his faults, is a past-master of his own profession—and acquires invaluable experience in making a “bandobast,” and in travelling and shooting generally; and one returns to civilisation in a state of absolutely perfect physical fitness.

Then followed a year at that delectable spot, Dera Ismail Khan, a cantonment on the right bank of the Indus facing the Waziristan country. It is a dismal place in itself, but we contrived to enjoy ourselves nevertheless. There was excellent shooting, quail and black partridge in the bed of the Indus during the cold weather, and straight-horned markhor to be had on the Sheikh Budin hill half-way between Dera Ismail and Bannu. And even in the hot weather, as long as one keeps fit,

life is made endurable by polo and racquets. Dera Ismail Khan was at that time one of the regular "Punjab Frontier Force" (known as "the Piffers") stations, which was very much a *corps d'élite*, and in which great camaraderie prevailed. It has now, alas! disappeared into the limbo of things that have been.

In spite of all these attractions I was delighted when I received a telegram one day, telling me that I had been posted as "Assistant Inspecting Officer" to the Kashmir Imperial Service Artillery. The Kashmir State Artillery consisted of two Mountain Batteries, one stationed in the valley of Kashmir and the other in the Gilgit district; and two artillery officers, generally a Captain and a Subaltern with Mountain Battery experience, were attached, one to each, to supervise their training and to act generally as advisers to the Indian Commanding Officers. No more delightful billet could well be devised for an active young man fond of sport, and with sufficient mental resources to enable him to face the rather solitary life with equanimity. Here I remained for the next three years. The Dogras, by whom these batteries are manned, are a quiet amenable folk, very intelligent and well behaved, and they are quick to master and apply new principles and details of parade work. The officers are men of a superior standard, well educated, hard-working and conscientious, and it was a real pleasure to co-operate with them.

The actual duties connected with the battery did not occupy a great deal of my time, and I spent most of my leisure working at languages, etc. Having by this time acquired a pretty good colloquial knowledge of the principal frontier tongues (Tibetan, Nepali, Pushtu, and Persian) in addition to Urdu, I now worked hard for two years at Russian, and although it was a great handicap not being able to talk or to hear it spoken, I acquired a large vocabulary and a good grip of the grammar, and

could read and write it fluently enough—which stood me in good stead on many occasions later on. And I also studied for the Staff College. The winter headquarters of the battery were at Bunji on the Indus, some thirty miles from Gilgit, and another Imperial Service Officer and I lived in a small bungalow (vulgarly known as the “Pig and Whistle”), an excellent centre for markhor shooting. Here I first met Lord Ronaldshay,<sup>1</sup> then a young man on his first trip to the East, who stayed for a day or two at the “Pig and Whistle,” and secured some good heads in neighbouring nullahs.

Our only social distraction took the form of an occasional trip to Gilgit, where were the Headquarters of the Gilgit Political Agency and half a dozen officers, civil and military. The Political Agent at that time was Captain Manners Smith, V.C. (whom I followed a good many years later as Resident of Nepal)—a great exponent of all kinds of sport, and a wonderful man on the hillside. He had won the V.C. at Nilt in the Hunza valley during one of the numerous little operations entailed by the taking over of this wild mountainous corner of the Indian Empire, the story of which is well told by Mr. E. F. Knight, in his “Where Three Empires Meet”—a classic both in style and substance which no one interested in the development of our Indian Empire can afford to miss reading. Under Manners Smith’s leadership we had many jolly meetings at Gilgit with football, polo, etc., and once a year, when the annual “jalsa” or gathering took place, we used to take on a picked polo team of Hunza Nagar men, first at their own game and then at ours, each side playing with their opponents’ sticks and by their opponents’ rules when on the other’s ground.

The shooting was of course magnificent, and we all spent many hours on the hillside after markhor, ibex, and

<sup>1</sup> Now the Marquess of Zetland, P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

brown bears, and the chikor (hill partridge) shooting too was of the best.

In the spring the battery moved up the Astor valley, and we spent the summer on a little grassy plateau at the junction of two streams, 9,000 ft. above the sea. My predecessor, with the help of the men of the battery, had built here a little two-roomed mud-hut which served me admirably as a dwelling. The hills all round swarmed with red bear, and I often spotted one in the morning from my little hut, and pursued and shot him before lunch-time. The Astor valley lies close to the great Nanga Parbat peak, over 26,000 ft. high, and a side valley leads right under the flank of the mountain, and so by a difficult pass into the Chilas district. I crossed this pass two or three times in order to shoot markhor in Chilas, and nowhere have I seen so overwhelmingly magnificent a spectacle as the east face of Nanga Parbat from near the head of the Astor valley.

Here, from an elevation of 12,000 ft. or so, one looks up at a sheer wall rising to over 26,000 ft. The dimensions are far too vast for the eye to appreciate, but the huge scale of it all was brought home to me once or twice by watching the avalanches on the upper slopes. Anyone who has been anywhere near an avalanche knows the terrific din which they create, the roar and crash which accompanies them. I have seen immense avalanches fall off the upper slopes of Nanga Parbat apparently just above one's head, but not a sound, not a rustle, was audible below. This negative aural evidence gave me a much better conception of the grandeur and size of the mountain than did even the positive evidence of my own eyesight.

The most interesting trip I had in the Gilgit district during my three years there was in the summer of 1901, when I was deputed to proceed to the Northern frontier, where the Indian Empire borders on Chinese Turkistan,

to meet a party of Russian scientific travellers who had obtained the permission of the Indian Government to enter India by this route. My instructions were to await their arrival on the Indian side of the frontier, and to conduct them to Gilgit. The journey to the frontier took me through the little hill States of Hunza and Nagar, inhabited by a splendid race of hillmen, cheery, active, brave, and independent; and after staying a day or two and playing polo with the chiefs, I pushed on and finally pitched camp at the junction of the two streams, leading to the passes—the Kilik and the Mintaka—which here cross the main axis of the Mustagh Range on to the Chinese Pamirs, and here I waited day after day with no news of the Russians.

It was going on to autumn, September, and the weather was perfect, and morning after morning I awoke to see the glorious clear blue sky overhead, and to think of the ovis poli absolutely running to waste on the other side of the passes. Flesh and blood (certainly not at the age of thirty) could not resist it and I finally yielded to temptation. My shikari was a good man and true, from Astor, and we decided to risk it. Starting at nightfall on two small hill ponies, and leading a third one laden with two light tents, some food, and our cooking and sleeping things, we started off just at sunset on a bright moonlight night. All night we rode quietly and silently across the Kilik pass, and down the easy slopes on the other side, across the wide flat Pamir (a "Pamir" is a level valley, characteristic of these regions, with mountains on either side), fording the stream in the middle, and so into the hills on the other side, which separate the Chinese from the Russian Empire; and here we halted at daybreak in a small side valley, tethered our ponies, and pitched our little tent by a stream, and cooked and ate our breakfast. After breakfast we climbed to the top of a hill, and got our glasses out. There were

quantities of poli, big and small, all around us. It was a sportsman's paradise. We stayed three days, shot three poli, all pretty good ones, and returned as we had come like thieves in the night, bringing our booty, the poli heads, with us.

After a week's interval, and there being still no signs of the Russians, we repeated the performance, this time taking an extra pony and a lad with us, and we had a small adventure to finish up with. We had spotted a small flock of seven fine poli rams which I was determined to get on terms with. For two days our stalks failed, and we were obliged to return to our camp on the other side of the passes on the third day, as I could not well risk being away any longer. So we packed up our little camp in the morning and sent it off with our servant, keeping only the shikari's and my ponies and some food for the day. We soon spotted our poli (the hillsides here are very open—no trees or growth of any kind except some small scrub bushes), and leaving the ponies hobbled, so that they could graze in the valley, we set off on our stalk. The configuration of the ground obliged us to make a long *détour*, and it was afternoon before we could get within range. But our stalk was a most successful one, and when I cautiously poked my head over a rock, I found I was within fifty yards of the rams. Two bullets knocked over two beauties, and a third was wounded as they ran off. He soon separated himself from the rest, and we saw that he was badly hit, so leaving the two heads where they lay we followed him. He went slowly along the hillside, and finally lay down on top of a small glacier right at the head of the nullah; and here, just before nightfall, we succeeded in killing him.

It was dark when we began our pilgrimage down the valley, taking it in turns to carry the heavy head (and a big poli head weighs a good bit), and to make matters

worse it came on to snow heavily. It took us a couple of hours' tramping to reach the place where we had left the ponies, but when we arrived there were no signs of them, and it was hopeless to search for them in the snow and darkness. So we had to make the best of a bad job, and stick it out where we were as best we could. We grubbed about underneath the snow until we found some yak-dung with which, and with some juniper twigs, we kindled a miserable smoky little fire. I had a flask of whisky which we shared,<sup>1</sup> and for food we cut strips off the poli's head and grilled them over our apology for a fire—not a cheerful way of spending the night at an elevation of 15,000 ft. on the Pamirs at the beginning of October and in a snowstorm. However, dawn broke at last. We found our ponies close by, and by noon we had retrieved the other two heads, and were on our way back to our camp, twenty odd miles across the Kilik pass, the ponies loaded with the heads, and we ourselves walking. And whenever we felt at all discouraged or weary, all we had to do was to have a look at the heads to realise that it was all well worth while.

The Russians never turned up after all. We heard afterwards that they had to change their plans, and so I returned to Gilgit alone, but well content with my little adventure.

But I had not forgotten my old love for Tibet during these years in the north-west, and I twice took leave and travelled all the way to Sikkim to complete my data for the route book, and on each occasion returned *viâ* Simla, where I was honoured by several interviews with the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, himself much interested at that time in the Tibetan problem. It was just about this time that the Dalai Lama's confidential adviser, the Buriat monk Dorjief, was conducting those negotia-

<sup>1</sup> My shikari was a good Muhammadan, but for this occasion the forbidden liquor counted as "dawai" (medicine).



tions between the Lama and the Czar which so alarmed the Indian Government and which were the direct cause of our subsequent Mission to Lhasa. The Dalai Lama, whilst maintaining his correspondence with Russia, absolutely refused to enter into any kind of communication with the Indian Government, and the various efforts made by Lord Curzon to induce him to do so were without avail. I myself put up one or two proposals as to how he might be forced to receive a letter or message from the Viceroy, amongst them a detailed scheme for riding rapidly through to Lhasa with a small escort of Indian cavalry—an attractive but perhaps rather wild project, which was considered, but turned down by the Viceroy. Sir Walter Lawrence was at that time Private Secretary to the Viceroy—the incarnation of tact, suavity, and good sense—and I had many long talks with him about it all.

All this time I had been continuing my work for the Staff College, and seeing in the papers that there were to be manœuvres on a big scale in connection with the great Delhi Durbar, which was to celebrate King Edward's accession, I asked for and obtained permission to join the Staff of General Wolfe Murray, who was in Command of the 1st Division of the Northern Force, and whom I had known and worked under at Simla. I joined up accordingly at Ambala early in December 1902, and filled different posts on the Staff as vacancies and opportunities occurred, acquiring a good deal of practical knowledge of staff detail under the eye of one of the most accomplished and considerate of Generals.

On the conclusion of the manœuvres, we went into camp at Delhi, and my friends the Whites kindly invited me to stay with them in the Sikkim State Camp, and it was here that I learnt all the latest news about Tibet, and that Lord Curzon was now determined that something should be done to rectify the anomalous and unsatisfac-

tory state of affairs on our Tibetan frontier. Details were still undecided, and a great deal of spade-work had still to be done before His Majesty's Government could be persuaded to sanction any forward policy in Tibet. But in the meantime it was decided at any rate to collect data and to prepare the way for subsequent developments. On hearing this I at once laid vigorous siege to the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Louis Dane,<sup>1</sup> and backed by my friend Sir Walter Lawrence, and Mr. Claude White, I was placed on special duty, with instructions to proceed at once to Sikkim, and a week later (in January 1903) I found myself back at Darjeeling and hard at work on all the problems and studies which had interested me for the last eight years.

This is a very brief and hurried sketch of my first seven years in India, which I regard as having constituted my apprenticeship to India and Indian frontier problems. The bulk of these experiences, such as the frontier expedition, the shooting in Kashmir, etc., have been shared by thousands of other young men in India, and they possess no intrinsic interest in themselves. But they may serve to illustrate the scope and nature of the opportunities which were then, and which, under somewhat changed conditions, are still, open to any active and ambitious young man who is prepared to take a little trouble to learn the languages and to study the history and character of the frontier peoples.

There was something to me very attractive in the magnitude of the whole thing—the vast distances and areas, the great mountain ranges, and the boundless plateaus, which constituted the *mise-en-scène*. My ideas were not, I suppose, particularly restricted when I arrived in India at the age of twenty-four, but they were subject to the inevitable limitations of an English (or Irish) environment and upbringing, so it was all the more intoxicating

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Louis Dane, G.C.I.E., C.S.I.

to find oneself launched, not academically, or through the medium of books, but actually in the flesh, into the midst of new countries, many of them vastly larger than the whole of the British Isles, new peoples, new languages, and new political problems, every one of them absorbingly interesting and sufficient in itself to provide study and employment for a lifetime. It was in fact an *embarras de richesses*, and the difficulty was, not to find something to do, but to make up one's mind which of many fascinating lines of enquiry one should adopt. It was, I think, the pure accident of my having been appointed to Darjeeling on first arrival in India that gave me my special love for, and interest in, Tibet and things Tibetan. I subsequently studied other frontier problems with almost equal avidity, but my main interest lay in Tibet, and my thoughts always flew back there on the slightest provocation wherever else I might happen to be serving.


But I was fortunately saved from the mistake of too narrow specialisation, which is good neither for the individual nor for the Government he serves. There are few more troublesome people to deal with than those who have remained at the same place so long that they are unfitted for employment elsewhere, and consider themselves indispensable and resent any advice or interference from outside. I remember on one occasion, when someone in my hearing mentioned one of his employés to the then Foreign Secretary, Sir Louis Dane, as being "indispensable," Sir Louis at once replied:

"Indispensable, is he? Then sack him at once."

An admirable maxim.

Governments (and I should say also business undertakings) cannot, in fact, afford to allow anyone, however able and gifted, to become indispensable; and what is more, there is no reason, except weakness and negligence, why they should.

And here I should like to add what an inspiration it was to a young man to be brought into contact, however remotely and in however humble a sphere, with a great personality like Lord Curzon's. Like all really earnest and determined men, Lord Curzon had his enemies and detractors, and also, no doubt, the defects of his qualities, but no one who knew anything of his work, and of the spirit which animated it, could feel for him any sentiments but those of respect and admiration. Whatever his hand did, truly he did it with all his might—big things or small, it was all the same. Shallowness and superficiality were utterly alien to his character and were abhorrent to him. His books of travel, written before he came to India at all, are classics, and he certainly instilled a new spirit into the Indian bureaucracy. This is no place to expatiate on his Vice-Royalty; it is only a tribute of respect from a subordinate. And I am sure that there are many men alive to-day who have derived inspiration throughout the remainder of their careers from contact with this great personality.



## CHAPTER II

### THE MISSION TO LHASA

#### PRELIMINARIES (1903)

I do not propose in these reminiscences to enter into much detail regarding the political history either of the Mission to Lhasa or of the other frontiers where I have been employed. In the case of Tibet, especially, the ground is well covered already. Apart from the official Blue Books, four in number, covering the whole period of our relations with Tibet for the twenty years 1890-1910, we have Sir Francis Younghusband's "India and Tibet," which gives a most admirable summary of India's relations with Tibet from the time of Warren Hastings to 1910, and which contains a detailed first-hand account of the Mission. Then there is Mr. Perceval Landon's "Lhasa," in two volumes. Mr. Landon accompanied the Mission as "The Times" correspondent, and he gives a full and most picturesque and interesting account of it all. And besides this, there are books by Dr. Waddell and Mr. Edmund Candler, also supplying much detailed information. But as the whole story is a pretty old one now, and as some twenty years have elapsed since Colonel Younghusband's book was published, it may be as well to jot down roughly and rapidly the train of circumstances which led to our having to intervene in Tibetan affairs at all.

From the time of our first appearance on this frontier it was the question of the status of the small hill State

of Sikkim which gave rise to possibilities of friction as between ourselves and the Chinese and the Tibetans. China claimed, and still claims, suzerainty over Tibet, and Sikkim was, at that time, regarded as subordinate to, or an appendage of, Tibet. Constant disputes and difficulties arose in consequence, and these culminated in 1886 in the despatch by the Tibetans of an armed force which crossed the Chumbi frontier by the Jelep La and occupied a place named Lingtu, some ten miles from the pass, and well within recognised Sikkim territory. After a long delay, and futile representations to China regarding the outrageous conduct of her feudatory, we were obliged to organise an expedition and drive out the Tibetans by force of arms. In March 1888 our troops attacked the Tibetan position at Lingtu, and drove back their force, which offered but a feeble resistance, first to Gnathong, and subsequently into the Chumbi valley, whither our troops followed them but withdrew almost immediately.

The Chinese then expressed regret at what had occurred, and a desire to have matters placed on a more satisfactory footing regarding this frontier, and they themselves, through the medium of their representative at Darjeeling, suggested the conclusion of a specific agreement as being essential for a good understanding on both sides, and they outlined the terms which the Chinese Government would accept. They also declared themselves to be quite able to enforce in Tibet the terms of the Treaty. Negotiations were accordingly set on foot, and in March 1890 a Convention was signed at Calcutta by the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, and the Chinese Associate Resident (Amban) in Tibet. The principal articles of this Convention were the definition of the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet as "the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing

into the Tibetan Mochu and northward into the rivers of Tibet"; an admission of the British Government's sole protectorate over Sikkim; and a mutual engagement to respect the boundary and to prevent acts of aggression on both sides of the frontier.

Rather more than three years later, in December 1893, after an immense amount of haggling over details, "Trade Regulations" to be appended to the Sikkim-Tibet convention were signed by British and Chinese Commissioners. Under these regulations a Trade Mart was to be established at Yatung in the Chumbi valley, to which British subjects were to have free access; goods (with a few specified exceptions) were to be exempt from duty for five years; and a number of other points of a more technical nature were also included which it is unnecessary to detail.

These two instruments, therefore—the Sikkim-Tibet Convention of 1890 and the Trade Regulations of 1893—constituted apparently a satisfactory settlement of the situation on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. By them the various questions under dispute were defined and regulated; the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet was laid down in unequivocal terms; our complete protectorate over Sikkim was acknowledged by China; and a Trade Mart was to be established in Tibetan territory with suitable provisions for the conduct of commerce between the two countries. We had not perhaps secured all that we had a right to expect, but at any rate a *modus vivendi* had been established; and if the other party to the bargain had had either the power or the good-will to carry out its share, there is no reason why these two agreements should not still be valid, and why the subsequent mission to Lhasa and all that it entailed should ever have taken place.

But the ink was scarcely dry upon the two documents in question when it became clear that in signing agree-

ments with us regarding Tibet and the Tibetans the Chinese had been reckoning without their host. The Tibetans, both then and later, were only too pleased to allow the Chinese to come forward and to interpose themselves between Tibet and the British whenever the Tibetan Government found itself in any difficulty, and to place on Chinese shoulders the responsibility for carrying on negotiations and staving off awkward situations. But as soon as it came to carrying into execution any provisions of the Chinese-made agreements of which the Tibetans might not approve, or which might be in the slightest degree inconvenient to them, then they simply "dug in their toes" and completely and obstinately ignored such engagements, and, when pressed, repudiated them altogether.

This was what now occurred, and the Treaty and the Regulations were reduced to a dead letter. The Tibetans refused to accept the boundary, and grazed their yaks as before in the barren region to the north of Giaogong—well within the watershed of the Teesta river; and they even sent officials to oppose Europeans there and elsewhere, in what was, strictly speaking in accordance with the terms of the Treaty, Sikkimese territory. They levied a 10 per cent. duty on goods entering Tibet at Phari; and as to the Trade Mart at Yatung, they soon found an easy way of dealing with that. Unfortunately, Article 1 of the Trade Regulations only stipulated that "all British subjects" should have access to the Mart for purposes of trade. Nothing was laid down as to Tibetan subjects having access thereto, and so it was quite a simple problem for the Tibetans to stultify the whole agreement without actually infringing it. They could not stop British subjects coming to Yatung, and they did not attempt to do so. But they issued orders that no Tibetan subject was to attend the Mart; and to see that these instructions were effectively carried out, they built a strong



defence wall right across the valley just below the Mart, and placed an armed guard there.

It was not a very dignified position for a great Power like Great Britain, but we bore it with exemplary patience for some five years. Constant representations were made to Peking, and correspondence was carried on with the Amban at Lhasa, but nothing tangible resulted. And it was at this stage that a fresh portent appeared on the horizon, which gave a more sinister and serious aspect to the whole problem, which hitherto, it must be admitted, had possessed nothing much more than a parochial importance. In the "Journal de Saint-Pétersbourg" of the 7th October, 1900, appeared an official Notification announcing the reception, by His Majesty the Emperor, on the 3rd October, of Aharamba-Agvan-Dorjieff, who was described as "first Tsanit Hamba to the Dalai Lama of Tibet."

This is the first mention which appears of the famous Dorjieff—the Buriat monk who acted as intermediary between the Dalai Lama and the Czar, and it was the first indication received by the British Government that the Dalai Lama, whilst obstinately refusing all communication with the Viceroy of India, had entered into relations with Russia. Dorjieff returned to Lhasa after his interview with the Czar in Livadia, but again travelled to Russia (through India this time) the following year, 1901, and proceeded *viâ* Odessa to St. Petersburg, where he was again received by the Czar and by Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, to whom he brought an autograph letter from the Dalai Lama. As it happened, these two visits exactly synchronised with the efforts which Lord Curzon was making to enter into direct communication with the Dalai Lama from India. He twice sent personal letters to the Dalai Lama by hand of a suitable messenger who had access to His Holiness. But on each occasion the Lama refused to

accept the letters, and stated that, under an old agreement with the Chinese, he was precluded from entering into direct relations with foreigners. It is true that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs assured the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg that the Tibetan Mission had no political or diplomatic significance whatever. It was, he stated, purely of a religious character, and he compared it to the Papal Missions frequently sent by the Pope to the faithful in foreign lands. The British Government was obliged to accept these assurances; but even so they did not alter the fact that the Dalai Lama was prepared to correspond direct with foreign statesmen, and to send his representative to visit a foreign court, whilst at the same time steadily refusing to enter into any kind of relation with the ruler of Tibet's nearest neighbour, India.

It was an anomalous situation, and when combined with the other circumstances narrated above—the systematic violation of our Treaty with China, etc.—the facts of the case clearly indicated the attitude of the Tibetans towards Great Britain, and were equally conclusive as to the inability of the Chinese to make good their claim to exercise control over the Tibetans in any respect, whether as regards their internal or their external policy. Neither the British nor the Indian Government had any desire whatever to interfere in Tibetan affairs, and they, of course, entertained no aggressive intentions of any kind. They took action reluctantly, and only when compelled by the course of events to do so. It lay with the Tibetans themselves to arrive at an amicable settlement with us at any time before the Mission actually reached Lhasa. It was now clear, however, that something would have to be done to bring these obstinate people to reason, and the Indian Government began to make their preparations accordingly; and as already stated, I was ordered to Sikkim to assist the Political Officer, Mr. White, in pre-

paring the way for the Mission which was shortly to follow.

This, of course, was just the opportunity for which every young officer lives in hopes. It was something quite out of the common, and it promised to develop into an important affair with all sorts of unforeseen possibilities. And, besides, this particular frontier possessed a very great interest for me, and I had already specialised there to some extent.

The next five or six months were busy and interesting ones. I prepared a detailed plan of campaign for a force advancing into Tibet through Sikkim, either by the Chumbi valley or *viâ* Kamba Jong, and I collected data regarding roads and supplies and other details necessary for military operations. At the same time I pursued my study of the language, and enquiries into Tibetan affairs generally. This would have been uphill work but for the fact that I was lucky enough to find at Darjeeling exactly the man I required as a teacher and informant. This man, Shabdung Lama by name, was a monk who had held high and influential position as secretary to one of the great incarnate Lamas,<sup>1</sup> and had travelled extensively in Tibet, but he had got into political trouble and been obliged to fly the country. Like many monks of the better class, he was a remarkably intelligent man. His education had been of the usual restricted description as given in a Tibetan monastery, and included nothing of modern science, history, geography, or anything else that we regard as constituting the elements of education. But although his knowledge of the outside world and its ways was limited in the extreme, this did not prevent him from having an exceedingly acute and well-exercised brain, and he was thoroughly *au fait* with all the details of the administration, politics, and personalities of his

<sup>1</sup> The Sinchen Lama of Dongtse. See Landon's "Lhasa," vol. i, pp. 235 *et seq.*

own country, besides being an erudite student of Buddhist lore as practised in Tibet. He was, in fact, the very man I wanted, and from him I derived an immense amount of most valuable detailed information regarding Tibet and its government—most of it absolutely new.

It was from him that I learnt for the first time of the existence of a "National Assembly" (called in Tibetan "tsong-du") at Lhasa which played a most important, and indeed a dominating part in all questions of policy, relating to foreign affairs,<sup>1</sup> and whose existence had till then been quite unknown to the outside world. I compiled lists of all the civil officials, lay and clerical, with their relative ranks, and their corresponding status in the Chinese official hierarchy as designated by their buttons or peacock's feathers (it was in matters of this kind, where Chinese manners and customs came into question, that we Indian officials found ourselves so ignorant and so handicapped); and I steadily pursued my study of the language, specialising in diplomatic courtesies and phrases, and in the "shé-sa" or honorific language, of which more later; and I drew up a memorandum for the phonetic transcription into English of Tibetan place-names. I also wrote a few chapters for a military report of Tibet, and made a systematic study of all existing maps of the country, and of the reports of all previous Tibetan explorers; and I drew up a proposal for a new road into the Chumbi valley, avoiding Sikkim altogether.

This road, starting from the plains of India near Nagrakata Railway Station on the Bengal Duars Railway, was to run up the valley of the Di Chu (or Jaldakha) river, and to cross a saddle only some 8,000 ft. high.

<sup>1</sup> Some details regarding the Assembly will be found in my Appendix (D) in the second volume of Mr. Landon's "Lhasa" with a description of their meeting-place, which I visited whilst we were at Lhasa the following year.

into the valley of the Ammo Chu—a route which contrasted favourably with the existing road, which crosses a 14,000 ft. pass, under heavy snow for several months in the year. The route was afterwards surveyed, and estimates prepared; and it would in all probability have been constructed in course of time, but, like everything else connected with Tibet, it was thrust into the background on the resignation of Lord Curzon from his second term as Viceroy and the advent of a Liberal Government to power in England, and it has never been revived.

Meanwhile, the correspondence between the Home and Indian Governments pursued its customary cumbrous course. His Majesty's Government viewed with extreme suspicion any programme involving an active or forward policy on the Tibetan frontier, and they were most reluctant to assent to any step which might lead to further complications or increased responsibilities in those parts. But Lord Curzon urged his point with vigour and persistence, and finally he wrung from them a grudging assent to arrange for a meeting with Tibetan delegates in order to talk matters over "at the nearest inhabited place to the frontier," which was found to be a fort and tiny hamlet named Kamba Jong, some fifteen miles across the northern Sikkim frontier as defined by the Treaty of 1890.

Events now began to move at an accelerated pace. We heard that Major F. E. Younghusband<sup>1</sup> had been appointed joint British Commissioner, together with Mr. Claude White of Sikkim, and shortly after Major Younghusband himself arrived at Darjeeling and proceeded to Gangtok to consult with Mr. White. It was here that I first met him, and in doing so made the acquaintance of a most striking character.

He had first come out to India as an officer in the 1st

<sup>1</sup> Now Lieut.-Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E.

Dragoon Guards, and whilst still a Subaltern had made a remarkable journey from Peking across Central Asia to India, which he describes in his book "The Heart of a Continent"—now a classic of Asiatic travel; and he had been subsequently employed by the Indian Government on special duty of a confidential and critical nature on the Pamirs. He had then been transferred to the Indian Political Department, and was at this time stationed as Resident at Indore. He was then about forty years of age. This was the man selected by Lord Curzon to lead the Mission to Tibet, and no better choice could have been made. I served under Major Younghusband as his secretary and interpreter for the next eighteen months, and was with him constantly in all conditions of hardship, danger, difficulty, and discomfort, and in one or two really tight places, and I can honestly say that I never once saw him for a moment even ruffled, far less discomposed or perturbed, by any circumstance or crisis which we had to encounter. An imperturbable exterior covered a strong and steadfast character and a most equable temperament. He possessed, moreover, all the best qualities of a real leader. His decisions were deliberately made, but once made they were absolute, and his "yes" or "no" were more convincing and reassuring than half a dozen speeches from a more voluble man. One knew exactly where one was with him. He was accessible, courteous, and considerate to all, absolutely devoid of "side" or pretension—incapable of it, in fact, as one came to realise when one knew him better; and (a very useful asset, especially in dealing with Orientals) he was gifted with an impressive and dignified appearance and manner. His experience of China and of Chinese officials, very unusual in any official of the Indian Government, was also an asset of great value.

Everything was now ready. The Chinese Amban at Lhasa had been notified of our approaching arrival at

Kamba Jong, and had been requested to depute suitable delegates, Chinese and Tibetan, to meet the British Commissioners, and we proceeded to move northwards through Sikkim towards the Tibetan frontier. Our party consisted of the officers of the Mission, Colonel Young-husband (as he now was), Mr. White, and myself, with a small escort of the 23rd Sikh Pioneers, under Captain Bethune. We arrived at Tangu, the last inhabited spot in Sikkim, at the end of June, and here Colonel Young-husband decided to remain for the present, while Mr. White and I went on to Kamba Jong to prepare the way and to arrange for a suitable reception for him when he arrived later.

On the 4th July Mr. White and I with a small escort marched north from Tangu, and the following day arrived at Giaogong, the place which the Tibetans claimed as the frontier. Two delegates from Lhasa, together with the Kamba Jongpen, were awaiting us here, and we had our first experience of Tibetan obstruction at first hand. The two Tibetan delegates were a General, who was a layman, and a Chief Secretary, a monk—for it is the custom in Tibet always to associate lay and ecclesiastical officials together in any matters of importance. The two delegates dismounted from their ponies as they saw us approaching and pressed forward on foot, begging us to stop and discuss matters with them there. This we politely, but firmly, declined to do, saying that we were not prepared to break our journey, but would be pleased to greet them officially and to talk things over with them in our camp.

They were very insistent, and we only succeeded in making our way past them and their retainers by a little gentle insistence, and we rode on to camp a few miles farther. The Jongpen accompanied us in a state of considerable perturbation, and hinted more than once at possible hostilities. He said to me:

“ You may flick a dog once or twice without his biting,

but if you tread on his tail, even if he has no teeth, he will turn and try to bite you."

We continued our journey early the next day, and proceeded without being further molested to Kamba Jong, and camped a few hundred yards from the fort. Colonel Younghusband joined us here a few days later.

Here we were, then, camped actually in Tibetan territory, and in a typically Tibetan landscape under the walls of a Tibetan "jong"<sup>1</sup> at an elevation of 15,200 ft. The three months that followed, although barren from a diplomatic point of view, were to me of the most intense and vivid interest. It was an invaluable period of preparation to the subsequent advance to Lhasa. The two Lhasa officials who had met us at Giaogong were not, it is true, of any use to us in any respect, social or otherwise. We only met them again once or twice (a sample of their general attitude is given farther on), and they shut themselves up in the Jong, to which they refused us access, and we practically never saw them.

But, as it happened, Kamba Jong lies in the province of Tsang, most of which is under the jurisdiction of the "Tashi Lama,"<sup>2</sup> the Incarnate Lama of the monastery of Tashi Lhunpo, near Shigatse. This prelate, whose predecessor had received Bogle with such kindness and hospitality in 1774, sent two of his own representatives to meet us at Kamba Jong, charged with the office of persuading us to return to the frontier at Giaogong, as desired by the Lhasa Government. With these two gentlemen, a layman and a monk in accordance with the usual precedent, I became very friendly. We visited

<sup>1</sup> "Jong," properly "dzong," is a district headquarters, and consists generally of a strongly built fort perched on a rocky hill. A "Jong-pen" (properly "Dzongpön") is the district magistrate in charge.

<sup>2</sup> As we call him. He is known to the Tibetans as the "Pen-chen Rin-po-che," which may be roughly translated as "the Precious All-wise."



each other almost daily, and, apart from their official representations which they dutifully repeated on every possible occasion, we conversed at length upon all kinds of topics, and exchanged information regarding our respective countries. In this I was greatly assisted by the young Maharaja Kumar of Sikkim, the eldest son and heir of the Maharaja of Sikkim, and himself, by the way, a divine incarnation, who had followed us to Kamba Jong, and who, as being of Tibetan race and speaking Sikkimese, which is a closely allied dialect of Tibetan, naturally gained their confidence.

Another useful acquaintance was the Te-Ling Kusho, a son of a former Sikkim minister, who lived on his small estate near-by, and who became a regular visitor to our camp. He was always full of information, and was thus useful to us, but we had afterwards the strongest reason for believing that he was a spy, and was employed for this purpose by the Lhasa Government. As, however, there was nothing particular that he could find out, this really did not matter, and we found him a useful and pleasant companion.

The nature of our relations with these curious people can perhaps be best illustrated by a few extracts from the official diary which I kept, and which has been published in the Blue Book.<sup>1</sup>

*30th July, 1903.*—At twelve o'clock the Kumar of Sikkim and I rode down to pay a visit to the Tashi-Lhunpo Treasurer, Ba-du-la, at his tent just beyond the Khamba village. The old gentleman received us in a very friendly manner, and we sat chatting to him for a couple of hours. We brought him down a number of illustrated papers in which he was much interested, especially in portraits of the King and of the Chinese Empress, and he and his friends were delighted with some photographs of Roman Catholic priests and dignitaries, whose dresses reminded them strongly of the Lama vestments

<sup>1</sup>I have corrected a few obvious misprints.

of Tibetan monasteries. We took photographs of Ba-du-la and his friends and attendants, and were afterwards entertained at a Tibetan meal consisting of buttered tea and other delicacies. Politics were avoided, and the conversation was confined to mutual enquiries regarding the customs, government, etc., of England and Tibet.

*3rd August, 1903.*—The Shigatse officer, Ba-du-la, with the old and the new Jongpens, came into camp about noon, and were entertained by the Kumar, who showed them pictures and photographs. While they were in camp, Captain Bethune worked the Maxim gun, which excited their utmost astonishment and evidently gave them an increased respect for the power of modern armaments. I also showed them the books on Turner's and Bogle's Missions to Tashi Lhunpo, which contained pictures of places with which they were well acquainted, and a copy of a Tibetan letter from the Penchen Rinpoche (i.e. the Tashi Lama) of that time, addressed to Turner. After this the Kumar and I entertained them at tiffin, and we parted on very friendly terms. Ba-du-la, I found, has a good acquaintance with the history of Tibet, more especially where it deals with the Gurkha and other campaigns.

*22nd August, 1903.*—About one o'clock the Kumar and I rode down to pay a visit to the Abbot. He and all the other Shigatse officials are encamped in little black yak-hair tents in a sort of small compound near the foot of the Jong. The Te-ling Kusho received us, and we stayed for a few minutes in his tent chatting and drinking buttered tea. He is a most hospitable, good-natured man, and thoroughly appreciates "a well-organised and well-delivered joke." He gave us each a brick of the first-class brick-tea which is drunk by well-to-do men in Tibet. I am trying to secure a good selection of the different classes of brick-tea, which I propose later on to show to our Darjeeling and Duars planters as a guide to the local taste. We then went on to see the Abbot. His tent consists of a sort of small enclosure surrounded by a seven-foot canvas wall and open to all the winds of heaven. Over one end, where he had established himself, is a small canopy, and this is his only shelter. He

has a raised seat with a sort of little altar on his right hand, where he has placed his sacred images and the small odds and ends with which Buddhist altars are decorated in Tibet. He sat bareheaded, with his right arm also bare. He received us in a very friendly manner, and we sat and chatted with him for half an hour on different subjects. His whole life has been devoted to his religious exercises, and he appears quite ignorant of the world at large—politics, science, history, and geography all equally beyond his ken. He has never travelled beyond the bounds of the Tashi-Lhunpo Monastery, except to visit his parents at his birthplace, a small hamlet beyond the Tsangpo. He gave us many interesting details regarding his monastic life.

*24th August, 1903.*—The Abbot having expressed a wish to call upon Colonel Younghusband again, an invitation was sent to him and Ba-du-la to come and lunch with us and discuss matters afterwards. At one o'clock accordingly these two arrived in camp, and sat for a few minutes in the Kumar's tent, where we showed the Abbot the celestial and terrestrial globes. He was especially interested in the former, wherein he recognised all the twelve signs of the Zodiac, calling them by the same names that we use; and he gave us an interesting little lecture on the science of astronomy as known in Tibet. Tibetan astronomy comes from the Hindus, and consists mainly of a mass of absurd superstitions and legends grafted upon very accurate observations of the actual movements of the heavenly bodies. The Abbot seemed to enjoy his luncheon, although he would not, of course, touch wine or tobacco. He partook of curry, fruit, and other dishes, and drank tea made in the European fashion, but without sugar.

*28th September, 1903.*—An invitation was sent to the Abbot, Ba-du-la, and the Te-ling Kusho to come to lunch. They arrived in camp about noon, and we entertained them for an hour with the gramophone, and by showing them Major Prain's and Mr. Hayden's collections of plants and fossils, and Mr. Harrison also took their photographs. The Abbot was good enough to recite a prayer into the gramophone, thus giving us a valuable

record. He amused us at lunch by giving us an account of how he conducted his little prophecies and obtained glimpses into the future. This he does with the aid chiefly of his rosary, and he told us that he had discovered that negotiations at Khamba Jong would be a long and unsatisfactory business, but would be conducted far more readily at Yatung. All three gentlemen were very pleased with their reception, and left after tiffin, after first making the round of the camp and visiting the telegraph office, etc.

These little incidents are all trivial enough in themselves, but they serve to show what agreeable people the Tibetans can be—they can also be extremely disagreeable when they like—to deal with, and how different from most Orientals. There is none of the caste prejudice which renders social relations between Hindus and Europeans so difficult as to be practically impossible; and there is none of the latent fanaticism which always exists at the bottom of the heart of even the most enlightened and friendly Muhammadan—for to a Moslem we are, and must be always in the end, infidels and eaters of pig's flesh. And above all, the Tibetans have a sense of humour: and a very keen and well-exercised sense of humour it is. Colonel Younghusband soon discovered this, and many a long political discussion, which threatened to try the temper of both parties, ended with a hearty laugh at some humorous remark of his. These people would talk to us, laugh with us, eat and drink with us—the monks only observing certain restrictions of their own. And, as we found later, the Tibetan women enjoy a very free and independent status, not less so in fact (always excepting the very latest developments of feminism in Europe) than their sisters in the west.

All this social good-will helped us later on, for although the monkish faction at Lhasa remained irreconcilably hostile to the last, the rumour of our friendly relations with the Tashi Lhunpo officials and others naturally

spread abroad, and tended to produce a good impression among the people generally.

But besides these social distractions, I spent much of my time wandering about, exploring the neighbourhood of Kamba Jong. The Lhasa delegates at first tried to object to our leaving the immediate vicinity of the camp, but we refused to be tied down, and wandered freely all over the country. One little excursion in particular lives in my memory. We had had a long spell of windy and rainy weather, but when this passed off, early in September, we were rewarded by a most glorious climate, clear blue sky, and hot sun all day and a few degrees of frost at night.

So I determined to make a trip to the great mountain-range which blocked our horizon to the north, and which constitutes the water-parting between the streams flowing into the Tsang Po (Brahmaputra) to the north and those flowing south through the Himalayas into India. Mr. White accompanied me, and we left camp at nightfall, and rode all night in bright moonlight almost due north across the plain; and about 1 a.m. we pitched our small tent among the foothills of the great range, and slept till daylight. In the morning we rode up the gentle slopes to near the top of the range, and I then climbed to a peak about 20,000 ft. high, whence I had a wonderful view of the unknown and unexplored country to the north across the valley of the Brahmaputra. I took observations and photographs, and we returned to camp, and on the next day to Kamba Jong, without being molested in any way, although we saw parties of Tibetan soldiers wandering about here and there.

On another trip I explored the country to the east of Kamba Jong, and reconnoitred a feasible route thence to Kala Tso lake, on the road to Gyantse. On this trip I visited the Ta-Tsang nunnery and took photographs of the nuns, a cheery little community.

Various members of the Mission kept turning up at

intervals all this time. First Mr. E. C. Wilton,<sup>1</sup> an officer of the Chinese Consular Service, who came all the way from Chengtu in Szechuan as our Chinese expert and interpreter. He was appointed an Assistant Commissioner a little later (together with Mr. White and Mr. Walsh of the Indian Civil Service), and proved an invaluable addition to the staff of the Mission, as without him we should have been very much at a loss in our communications with the Chinese at Lhasa and elsewhere. In addition to his admirable official qualifications as a linguist and diplomatist, Mr. Wilton also possessed a very keen and at times uncontrollable sense of humour, which was a source of embarrassment to him more than once at awkward moments during our solemn conferences in the course of the next year or so.

Here too Mr. Hayden,<sup>2</sup> of the Geological Department of the Government of India, joined us, and Captain Walton, I.M.S., as Medical Officer and expert ornithologist. Our escort included a detachment of twenty-five Mounted Infantry drawn from the men of the 23rd Sikh Pioneers, mounted on small local ponies, and commanded by that very adventurous officer, Lieutenant F. M. Bailey, until recently Political Officer in Sikkim, and with a most remarkable career behind him as an explorer and for his adventures during the war.

But meanwhile matters had arrived at a complete deadlock as far as any progress from the diplomatic point of view was concerned. The two Lhasa representatives remained shut up in the Jong and refused to budge from their position of "We can't talk to you here. Return to the frontier and we will negotiate," and appeals to the Chinese Amban at Lhasa were perfectly useless, and only revealed the fact that he had no real power or influence

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Ernest Wilton, K.C.M.G.

<sup>2</sup> The late Sir Henry Hayden, who was killed climbing in the Alps in 1923.

over the Tibetans. Clearly the only thing to be done was to push on a bit farther, and see whether we could not bring them to reason elsewhere, and H.M. Government with some reluctance gave permission for the Mission to proceed to Gyantse.

This at once put the whole affair on a bigger and more serious footing. An advance of some 100 miles across the Himalayas into the heart of Tibet, with every prospect of being met by armed opposition *en route*, necessarily implied a large increase to the escort accompanying the Mission, and it resolved itself in fact into something more resembling a military expedition on a small scale than a peaceful diplomatic mission. Preparations were set on foot accordingly. Colonel J. R. L. Macdonald, R.E., was appointed to command the troops detailed to constitute the Mission escort, and I was telegraphed for to meet him in Darjeeling, whither I proceeded early in October, whilst Colonel Younghusband followed a few days later *en route* to talk things over with the Viceroy at Simla. October and November were spent in organising the expedition, and early in December the little force set out to find its way first into the Chumbi valley, the easiest and most direct route to Gyantse. It was no light undertaking to take even so small a force across this mountainous country during the winter months—a march which involved the crossing of a 14,000 ft. pass along roads which were passable only with difficulty even to pack animals.

Transport indeed was the main difficulty. No wheeled vehicle could be employed after the first few miles from the base at Siliguri, and the provisioning and transportation of the force had to depend entirely upon pack animals and coolies. India was ransacked for every available animal and coolie suitable for such conditions, and the result was a motley assembly of ponies, mules, yaks, donkeys, and men from all parts of the hills, even from far-distant Baltistan, officered mostly by selected officers

from Gurkha battalions, the whole under the command of the capable and indefatigable Major Bretherton, of the Supply and Transport Corps.

And here it is time to mention our good friends the Nepalese, next-door neighbours to Tibet and to Sikkim. The Prime Minister of this little hill country, Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jang, from the first displayed the utmost goodwill in assisting us to bring the Tibetans to reason. He himself wrote letters to the Tibetan Government, and later to the Dalai Lama, couched in eloquent terms, pointing out to them the folly and uselessness of antagonising the British Government and the vital necessity of meeting our proposals in a reasonable spirit. And as a practical proof of his good-will, he supplied the Mission with no less than 8,500 yaks—invaluable beasts of burden in these high altitudes. I shall have much to say regarding these trusty and loyal Nepalese friends later on when, as Resident (and afterwards Envoy) in Nepal, I was brought into close personal touch with them, and could better appreciate their friendship and their invaluable assistance to the British Empire during the Great War.

All these practical difficulties, however, were successfully overcome, and starting early in December the Mission was safely landed in the Chumbi valley by the 12th. Beyond a request by the Chinese officer at Yatung that we should not proceed beyond the Trade Mart, there was no opposition or even remonstrance, and the people of the valley were subdued and friendly enough, although nervous as to their ultimate fate. It was, indeed, as Colonel Younghusband so frequently pointed out in his dispatches, an extraordinary thing how little prestige we then had on this frontier. The local hillmen entertained a most exaggerated fear of both Chinese and Tibetans, but were especially afraid of the Tibetan Government, knowing the awful vengeance meted out by the Lamas to anyone who fell into their bad graces or opposed them; and



hitherto they certainly had not had much cause to respect the British. It is true that we had defeated and driven back the Tibetan forces over the passes in 1888, but we had retired again almost immediately, and had done nothing to reassert our rights and position ever since.

A glance at the map will show that the Chumbi valley is a wedge-shaped slice of territory lying between Sikkim and Bhutan on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. It is, in fact, geographically on the Indian side of the mountains, although politically it is part of Tibet. Colonel Younghusband therefore decided not to waste time here, but again to push on across the main axis of the Himalayas, and to camp on the Tibetan plateau until such time as it was possible for the whole force to advance to Gyantse. The Jong at Phari was occupied by the military soon after we arrived in the valley, and early in January 1904 the Mission with a sufficient escort marched across the Tang La—the open easy pass which here crosses the main Himalayan chain at an elevation of 16,200 ft., and took up their abode at the tiny hamlet of Tuna, some twenty miles from Phari. It was originally intended to continue the advance from here some time in February, but difficulties of supply and transport made a long delay inevitable. Snow began to fall on the passes, and it was all the G.O.C. could do to keep his troops supplied with the necessary fodder and provisions. The line of communication into the Chumbi valley had now been transferred from the Jelap La to the Nathu La *viâ* Gangtok. This made available a few extra miles of cart-road, but the Nathu La is also over 14,000 ft., and snow lay deep upon it and for many miles on either side. It was a herculean task to keep the road open and working all through the bitter cold and snow of those winter months, and no better work was done during the whole course of the Mission than that which was accomplished by the officers and men working in such conditions.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MISSION TO LHASA

(1904)

THE Mission spent the best part of the next three months, January, February, and March, at Tuna, and it would have been difficult to select a less delectable spot in which to spend the winter anywhere on the face of the globe. It is a tiny village of half a dozen stone houses, so filthy inside as to be quite uninhabitable, situated on a bare and bleak plateau, 15,000 ft. above the sea, and swept by continual winds rising at intervals to the dignity of blizzards. In spite of the great elevation the snowfall is light and infrequent, as once across the main axis of the Himalayas the moisture-bearing currents are intercepted by the mountain mass, and the rain, or snow as the case may be, is deposited on its southern slopes. But now and again snow fell to the depth of a few inches, and increased our discomfort. We mostly lived in our small single-fly tents, and we built ourselves a wretched little apology for a mess hut out of loose stones with a tarpaulin for a roof. There was very little to do, as we were boycotted by the Tibetans, and there was no shooting or sport of any kind; but in spite of all this we made the best of it, and none of us were, I believe, at heart in the least discontented with our lot. We all felt that we were on the verge of a great adventure, and that there was no saying what might happen next. There was every sign that the Tibetans meant to resist any forward movement by force

of arms, and there also seemed a good chance of a sudden night attack. The Tibetan army was reported to be located some six or seven miles away towards the north, in a small village where also were lodged various delegates from Lhasa. We passed the time in various pursuits, according to our different idiosyncrasies. Colonel Younghusband could be seen every morning after breakfast, clad in his thick Jaegar coat and with a book under his arm, making his way to a little heap of rocks near-by, where he ensconced himself in a sheltered corner and studied his favourite philosophic or religious works. In my own case, I continued to try and acquire information about the country and its queer people and customs, and I began the little collection of folk tales which I afterwards published.

Only one incident of note occurred during this interval of waiting. Colonel Younghusband quietly informed me one morning that, after careful reflection, he had decided to ride over unescorted to the Tibetan camp in order to make another effort to explain the true position of affairs to the Tibetan delegates, who, he thought, might even now not realise properly how matters stood, and what were our real intentions. I, of course, realised the great risk of any such proceeding, but I knew the Commissioner too well by now to attempt any remonstrance, so I merely remarked that it was a bit risky, and declared myself ready to accompany him. The Officer Commanding our small escort, Colonel Hogge, of the 23rd Pioneers, was naturally rather perturbed at the danger which the Commissioner proposed to run, as he was responsible for his safety. But Colonel Younghusband absolved him from all responsibility, and said that he alone was responsible for what he was about to do. Captain Sawyer, a young officer of the 23rd, begged to be allowed to accompany us, and Colonel Younghusband consented, so we three set out alone and rode north across

the plain towards the Tibetan camp. This consisted of a dirty ramshackle collection of black tents, pitched here and there without any order or method among the cottages and sheepfolds of a small hamlet some six miles from our camp. As we drew near we saw that there were a good many so-called soldiers, just ordinary peasants armed with matchlocks, swords, etc., who swarmed out of their tents as we approached, but otherwise manifested little excitement or interest. We found that the delegates were living in a rather superior stone house, whither we proceeded, and were civilly greeted by one of the generals, who conducted us to an upper room, where we found all the delegates, including the representative monks of the three great Lhasa monasteries, in solemn conclave. We were given seats, and the discussion began.

All that followed has been so well told already both by Colonel Younghusband and by Mr. Landon, that there is no need for me to record at length a twice-told tale. Briefly, the British Commissioner explained patiently and at full length all the circumstances leading up to our presence in Tibet, and detailed our grievances against the Tibetan Government and our present desiderata. The lay officials, mostly military men, were civil enough, and argued and asked us questions, but the three monks were exceedingly truculent in their manner, and demanded that we should immediately return to Yatung, and when we rose to take our leave they became noisy and threatening. Things looked nasty for a few minutes. We were, of course, absolutely in their power, and it seemed unlikely that we should be allowed to return to our camp. But the Commissioner, as always, remained perfectly cool and impassive, and replied to their heated demands with courtesy and good humour, and finally we were allowed to depart on the undertaking that a deputy should visit us the next day to learn whether we had

fixed a date for our return to the frontier. We all three breathed more freely as we rode clear of the Tibetan camp and started to canter across the plain towards Tuna.

Colonel Younghusband's intention in making this visit was excellent, and he could honestly say that he had left no stone unturned to try and convince these obstinate people of the justice of our contentions and of the hopelessness of trying to fight us. But there is no denying that we incurred a very grave risk, and it was certainly touch and go whether they held us as prisoners or not; and if they had, a very embarrassing state of affairs would have arisen for the British and Indian Governments.

The only other incident at Tuna was the arrival of a Bhutanese envoy from the virtual ruler of Bhutan, the Tongsa Penlop. Colonel Younghusband, with his usual perspicacity, had early divined the importance of securing the good-will, and, if possible, the co-operation of the Bhutanese in our proceedings. They were next-door neighbours to us and to Tibet, and their country flanked the Chumbi valley on the east; and being themselves Buddhists it seemed possible that representations from them to the Dalai Lama might carry an additional weight. So on entering the Chumbi valley he wrote a letter to the Tongsa Penlop, which was cordially received and answered, and shortly afterwards one of the Bhutanese officials came to visit the Commissioner in camp. He proved a friendly and sensible person, and after hearing our side of the case from Colonel Younghusband he visited the Tibetan delegates and discussed matters with them, and did his best to persuade them to act more reasonably. But in this he failed, and he returned to Bhutan. But although nothing tangible resulted at the moment from his visit, it paved the way for the inauguration of closer relations with the Bhutanese. The Tongsa Penlop himself eventually accompanied us to

Lhasa in the character of mediator and the well wisher of both sides, and he remained our staunch and good friend ever after till his death a few years ago.

However, the time slipped away, and towards the end of March General Macdonald marched up with the rest of the troops, which constituted the armed escort, amounting to some 2,000 men altogether. With him came Mr. Perceval Landon, "The Times" correspondent. It is over twenty-five years ago, but I remember it all so well. I rode out with the Commissioner to greet the General, and we met on the bare windswept plain, Chumolhari and the other great peaks of the Himalayas forming a background. Mr. Landon in his civil dress looked spruce and neat, a contrast to us who had mostly by this time grown beards of varying shapes and dimensions, and appeared, no doubt, an unkempt crew after the troglodytic life of the last three months. And to us Indian officials who so seldom came across anyone outside our own walk of life, and who in this case had been absolutely isolated from the world at large for several months, it was especially enlightening and encouraging to meet someone from the outer world whose experiences and viewpoints were so entirely different from ours, and who instilled a fresh interest into all that we were doing by his own vivid interest and trained intelligence. He had already made himself acquainted with nearly everything that had at this time been written about Tibet, especially with the journeys of Bogle, Turner, and Manning, all of whom had traversed portions of the route we were now following. His curiosity and interest in everything were (as befits a real journalist) insatiable, and often threw a quite new light upon what we had come to regard as commonplace, and inspired us to fresh enquiries. He at once became a member of our little Mission mess, and was with us in all our vicissitudes of fortune until after we reached Lhasa.

From now on, until after the capture of the Jong at Gyantse, we were destined to find ourselves (except for a short lull at Gyantse) in a state of open hostilities with the Tibetans. We had done our best to avoid this, and the Commissioner had even run a grave personal risk, as recounted above, to try and bring home to these simple and ignorant but obstinate folk the folly of trying to oppose us. We marched from Tuna on the 31st March, knowing that there was trouble brewing which would probably come to a head that very day. The Tibetan force, such as it was, was deployed across the road a few miles farther on, partly along the crest of a ridge to our left, and the main body sheltered behind a small defence wall on the road itself, the wide plain to the east being left unguarded. What followed is admirably and accurately told both by Sir Francis Younghusband and by Mr. Landon in their respective books, and I need only summarise it here.

The Tibetan Generals with the monk delegate rode out to meet us about a mile in front of their position, and we had an informal palaver sitting on the ground—they and Colonel Younghusband and General Macdonald, with myself interpreting. It was the same old story over again. We were to return to Yatung: they would agree to nothing else. The Commissioner replied that this was impossible; that we would continue our advance; and that they would be expelled by force from their position if they offered any resistance. They returned to their main body, and our little force continued its advance. Both sides had orders not to fire first, and from a military point of view a most absurd situation resulted. Our men advanced right up to the wall, behind which the mass of the Tibetans were crowded together higgledy-piggledy, and our mountain and machine guns and mounted infantry deployed on the plain to the east ready for action. The Tibetan Generals and senior officers

were on our side of the wall sitting in a circle with a few of their men armed with swords and matchlocks standing round them. We could of course have simply marched round their left flank and continued our journey beyond, but this would have meant leaving an armed force of some 2,000 men in our rear and right across our line of communication—an obviously impossible course.

They had to be got out of the way somehow or other, and the Commissioner and the General decided to start matters by disarming them, and I was instructed to inform their Commander of this intention, and to advise him to order his men to surrender their arms peacefully. I rode up close to where the Tibetan officers were sitting and dismounted from my pony and went and gave them the General's message, speaking as gently and politely as I could, and using of course the honorific language. But their demeanour was sulky and reserved. They barely replied to me, and sat still on the ground, occasionally muttering to one another.

The fact was that these unfortunate people were in an impossible predicament, between the devil and the deep sea. They knew very well that whatever they did their fate was sealed. If they fought us like this in the open they were bound to be defeated; whereas if they let us pass, they would meet with an even worse fate at Lhasa. For the Tibetan Government made no allowances for failure, especially in the sphere of foreign affairs, and was in the habit of meting out severe penalties to any of its public servants who were unsuccessful in their missions or remiss in their duties.

So I was obliged to report failure. The General gave the necessary orders, and a few Sikhs were marched up, and seizing hold of some of the Tibetans' muskets they began to disarm them by force. The inevitable happened at once. Some Tibetan (it is not known who it was)



snapped off a pistol and blew a Sikh's jaw to pieces, and then the fat was fairly in the fire. Rifles, pistols, and muskets began popping off all round. Swords were whirling and slashing. Some Tibetans were trying to climb across the wall to attack us, and others to climb back to escape from us. For a few minutes it was a wild and confused *mêlée*.

Anyway, it was no place for the Secretary of a peaceful Mission, and I cleared off as quick as I could, mounted my pony, and returned to where Colonel Younghusband was standing only some thirty or forty yards away beside a ruined house at one end of the wall. From here we watched what followed. In a very few minutes all the Tibetans on our side of the wall were shot down or captured, the remainder of their force was in full flight along the road north, and our men were blazing away at them as they ran. It was sheer slaughter, but there was no stopping it. It had to be. They disappeared at last, leaving their dead and wounded strewn along the road. Everything possible was done for the wounded. They were carried into Tuna as soon as possible, and every Medical Officer in the force devoted himself to attending on them.

Our own casualties were slight, but included some nasty sword-cut wounds received in the *mêlée* by the wall. Major Wallace Dunlop, of the 23rd Sikh Pioneers, and Mr. Edmund Candler, the "Daily Mail" correspondent, both had their hands badly cut about, and lost fingers which had to be amputated.

We one and all deeply regretted this wretched affair. None of us, whether employed on civil or on military duty, bore the slightest ill-will to the harmless good-natured Tibetan peasants, and there was no military glory to be gained by a victory over such an ill-armed herd—they bore no resemblance to a military force. But at any rate the incident cleared the air. We knew where we

were now—that Lhasa was out to fight us, and we had to make our plans accordingly. We did hope that possibly this lesson might convince the Tibetan Government of the uselessness of trying to stop us by force of arms, and might induce them to take a more reasonable view of the situation, but we soon found that they were still as intractable as ever, and a good deal more fighting of a sort was still necessary in order to bring them to their senses.

The little force, after a halt of a day or two, continued its march to Gyantse, where we arrived on the 11th of April, after a skirmish in a defile *en route*, where the Tibetans offered some opposition, but were easily driven off. Gyantse Jong is a strong and imposing building of the usual Tibetan type, built on a rocky hill, with the town of Gyantse (elevation 13,120 ft.) nestling below it, and adjoining the great monastery of Pal-kor-cho-de. It lies in a wide, well-cultivated valley with a river running through the centre.

For the next three weeks or so everything went smoothly on the surface. From a political point of view, it is true, there was no progress. No Tibetan delegates came to see us, and the Amban was prevented from leaving Lhasa by the Dalai Lama. The Mission, with a small escort of 400 to 500 men, took up its abode in a Tibetan country house, some 1,200 yards from the Jong, and General Macdonald, with the bulk of the little force, returned to the Chumbi valley, where the problem of supplies presented fewer difficulties. I employed my time riding about the valley, visiting monasteries and country houses, and learning all I could about the curious people amongst whom we found ourselves. In these little trips Mr. Landon was my constant companion, and between us we amassed a great deal of curious and unique information. The village people were friendly enough, but all the bigger men, landowners, etc., had been called away,

and we met no one of any station or importance during this period. The climate at this time of year is perfect—bright sunny days, never too hot, and cold nights. The country people were busy with their ploughing and sowing.

But there was a storm brewing, and we were soon in the thick of it. Reconnaissances up the Lhasa road had ascertained that a force of Tibetans had built a strong wall (the Tibetans love walls) across the main road just beyond the Karo La pass, some forty to fifty miles from Gyantse, and that the pass and neighbourhood were strongly occupied. This implied a potential menace to our line of communication with India, as by a flanking movement a force from the Karo La could cut across to our communications at Kangma, and Colonel Brander, of the 32nd Pioneers, who was in command at Gyantse, decided, with the Commissioner's approval, to send out a small column to disperse this gathering.

On the 3rd May the column, consisting of about 300 men under command of Colonel Brander himself, moved off, and by the 5th had camped within striking distance of the wall, which was found to be strongly held. I had accompanied the column to assist Colonel Brander in any negotiations we might have with Tibetans *en route*, and in intelligence work generally. After reconnoitring the Tibetan position on the afternoon of the 5th, we returned to camp, and a plan was worked out for the attack next morning. During the night a messenger reached us from Gyantse with two messages. The first was from Colonel Younghusband, to say that the Mission post had been heavily attacked just before dawn that morning, but that the attack had been beaten off with small loss to the defence but with heavy damage to the enemy, and that a large Tibetan force was now in occupation of the Jong and neighbouring villages. The other message was from General Macdonald intimating that he disapproved

of the operation against the Tibetans on the Karo La, and insisting that the force should at once return, unless it were actively involved in an engagement.

This was a nasty predicament for the commander of a small detached column to find himself in. He was not actually engaged with the enemy, but the fact could not be ignored that he had marched out in order to attack them, had reconnoitred their position and drawn their fire, and camped within striking distance. To withdraw now without attacking would inevitably be regarded by the Tibetans as a proof that we were afraid of them, and would certainly mean that the column would be pursued and harassed all the way back to camp by a triumphant foe. On the other hand, he had to bear in mind that the tiny force (only about 150 men) left to guard the Commissioner had been heavily attacked, and was now in danger of further attack during his absence; whilst the wall itself was an ugly proposition, and failure to capture it would leave him worse off than he was at present.

Colonel Brander, however, did not remain long in doubt, and he decided that the boldest course, namely to attack, was best; and he was encouraged thereto by a characteristic message from Colonel Younghusband authorising him to do so and accepting full responsibility.

The action which then took place was no doubt a very small affair in the scale of modern fighting, but in some respects it is unique in the annals of war. The whole action was fought at an elevation of over 16,000 ft., and during its course flanking parties climbed to over 18,000 ft. The position was a very strong one. The wall itself, built of heavy stone and loopholed, was quite impervious to our two little 7-pounder mountain guns, and a direct attack which was attempted by the infantry was stopped, Captain Bethune, of the 32nd Pioneers, a brave and popular officer, losing his life. A flanking party of the

8th Gurkhas, under Major Rowe, on the mountain face to the left was also held up, and at one time we seemed to have arrived at a complete impasse. Then Colonel Brander decided to dispatch a small flanking party up the almost precipitous mountain face to the right, and a section of Sikhs, led by a native officer (Wassdur Singh), scrambled up 1,500 ft. to a position overlooking the wall, and their first volley so surprised and frightened the Tibetans that they deserted their position and fled pell-mell away down the valley, hotly pursued by the Mounted Infantry under Captain Ottley. It was a gallant and an adventurous little fight, undertaken in extraordinary conditions, and none of those who took part in it will ever forget it. We camped that night close by, and the column started on its return to Gyantse the following morning. Mr. Landon and I, with Captain Ottley and a few of the Mounted Infantry, rode right through to Gyantse, anxious to find out what was happening there.

For details of the night attack on the Mission post I would refer again to Sir Francis Younghusband's "India and Tibet." Suffice it to say that it was touch and go with the garrison, and that if a few more of the attackers had succeeded in climbing into the enclosure, nothing could have saved the small force inside. As it was the alarm was given just in time, and the attack was beaten off with next to no loss to the defenders, but with heavy casualties to the Tibetans. Every able-bodied man in the post took his share in repelling the attack, the Commissioner himself and all of his staff who were there seizing any weapons they could lay their hands on and using them freely. And even Mr. Mitter, the Bengali head clerk of the Mission, and distinctly not a man of war, is said to have done great execution with a double-barrelled shot gun.

From the 7th May till the relieving column under

General Macdonald reached Gyantse on the 26th June our little force lived practically in a state of siege. It is true that we were never entirely invested, and, except for a few days, our communications with India were kept open all the time; but our little post was overshadowed by the huge Jong towering above us only some 1,200 yards distant, and we were constantly under fire during the whole of this period. But very little damage was done. The enemy's firearms were inefficient and primitive, consisting of old, smooth-bore brass cannon, about the size of our 7-pounders, and old muzzle-loading jingals (it was during this time that "Punch" satirised our terrible plight by those delightful verses "Jingals from the Jong"); but they kept up a constant banging, and we had to keep under cover. And the scene at night was most picturesque when the garrison of the Jong got an attack of nerves or meditated an assault—the whole great fabric reverberating with the roar of all their noisy weapons and illuminated like a Brock's firework display with hundreds of flashes from their black-powder cartridges.

We on our part were far from inactive, and retained a very considerable freedom of movement all the time, and we severely limited any undesirable enterprise on the part of the Tibetans that encroached anywhere within our sphere of influence. Captain Ottley was always ready to dash out with a few of his Mounted Infantry, and to nip in the bud any signs of undue activity in the open. They, on their side, were constantly trying to hem us in, and to make our investment closer and more effective, and we had to be on the look-out for this. On several occasions, when they ventured to occupy houses or villages nearer than we thought convenient, we had to make a night attack and drive them out, and either demolish or occupy the buildings in question.

The leading spirit in all such undertakings was Captain

Sheppard, R.E.,<sup>1</sup> who had joined us during the siege. He and I had been contemporaries and close friends as cadets at Woolwich, and it was delightful to meet him again here. He was, and is, a man of untiring energy and unquenchable vigour and enthusiasm. (It speaks well for his physical fitness that on returning home after the Tibetan expedition—which owing to the elevation and the severity of the climate was a pretty stiff test to anyone's constitution—he won the Amateur and the Army Racquets Championships, and more marvellous still, he won the Army Championship again in 1921 as a Major-General at the age of 51, after serving throughout the whole of the East African campaign during the Great War, and was in the finals of the Amateur Championship in 1925, when he was beaten by Mr. C. C. Pell, the American player.)

On one occasion, as we were getting rather short of officers, I obtained permission to accompany him as his assistant with a storming party to blow up some houses near-by which the Tibetans had occupied, and whence they were annoying us with a flanking fire. We crept up just before dawn and came under fire from the roofs of two houses, but succeeded in entering one of them, whose door had been left open, Sheppard shooting a couple of men with his revolver as we ran in. The roof was covered with armed men, but I succeeded in getting a box of guncotton (Sheppard did not believe in small charges or half measures) up on to the first floor, and in lighting the fuse with the help of a couple of Sikhs. After lighting the fuse we started to run down the steep ladder leading to the ground floor, and half-way down the fixed bayonet of one of the Sikhs got stuck across the stairway. He succeeded in pulling it out, and we fell in a heap at the bottom of the ladder just as the guncotton exploded, blowing off the roof of the house and scattering its garri-

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General S. H. Sheppard, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

son in fragments all over the place. I was wounded just afterwards by a jingal bullet in the shoulder—a small lump of lead which passed through my left upper arm and under my left shoulder-blade, and finally lodged in the backbone, luckily without breaking anything. It was cut out next day, and I was well and about again within ten days.

Colonel Younghusband took advantage of what may, I suppose, be termed a lull in the diplomatic part of the mission, to run down to Chumbi to consult with General Macdonald, and to get into closer touch with the Government of India. He came in for another night attack *en route*, when the little post at Kangma was suddenly assaulted just before dawn by a force of Tibetans. As at Gyantse, they were beaten off and pursued with heavy loss to them and next to no damage to us. So for the personnel of a peaceful Mission we were having an unexpectedly lively time.

Nothing else very worthy of note occurred until the relieving force under General Macdonald, and accompanied by the Commissioner, reached Gyantse on the 26th June after a skirmish or two *en route*. The Tongsa Penlop of Bhutan himself followed a few days later, and in the character of mediator attempted to bring about an understanding between the two parties; but after one or two conferences with the Tibetan representatives it was clear that such negotiations were quite useless, and that the matter would first have to be fought out. So the Tibetans were given an ultimatum that if they had not evacuated the Jong by a certain date and time they would be attacked. No reply was received, and operations were undertaken accordingly.

In spite of the enemy's inferiority in armament and military technique the Jong was a formidable position to attack. It was garrisoned by several thousand (some calculations said eight thousand) men. The walls and



buildings were of solid masonry, the rocky hillside was steep and in places precipitous, and all the regular approaches were covered by flanking and direct fire. The General decided to effect a breach in the outer wall at its lowest part, some 20 to 30 ft. above the ground level nearly opposite the village of Pa-lha. This operation was begun by the 10-pounder mountain guns on the first day, and some houses at the foot of the cliff were occupied by assault during the night. Next day the breach was enlarged, and by 4 p.m. was considered practicable, and the assault began. I was standing with Colonel Young-husband on the roof of the Mission house, and we watched the whole affair with intense interest. The troops detailed for the attack were a Company of the 8th Gurkhas, under Lieutenant J. D. Grant, and we soon saw the tiny figures crawling slowly up the steep almost precipitous slope that led to the breach in the wall. Every orifice and apparently every stone in the great building belched fire and smoke, and stones were being rolled down the slope on to the attackers. It appeared absolutely impossible that any human being could ever reach the top. But the little figures struggled on. Every now and then we could see one of them topple over and lie still, or go rolling down the slope, and gradually the leader reached the breach, then another man, and another. They pushed on, and suddenly like magic the defence fell to pieces like a house of cards and the defenders began to flee, their fire slackened, and in a few minutes the whole thing was over. The Tibetans were escaping in hundreds, climbing and jumping down from the far side and making off across the country and into the hills, as fast as their legs or ponies could carry them.

It was a gallant deed, gallantly done. The 8th Gurkhas had added another laurel to their records, and their leader, Lieutenant Grant, well merited the Victoria Cross which was afterwards awarded to him.

It was a great day, especially for those of us who had been practically besieged and under almost continuous fire day and night for over six weeks. We had never been much alarmed as regards the Tibetan military strength and prowess, but still it was a strain, and our little post in the plain had been so completely dominated by the huge Jong towering above us, less than a mile away and crammed with armed men, that the sight of the Union Jack flying from its summit was a very welcome one. We spent the next few days exploring the valley round about, and dispersing any enemy gatherings which still remained, and on the 14th July we started on our march to Lhasa. It was a cheery little force that set out, and we all felt that we had now entered upon the last stage of the great adventure.

After brushing aside some slight opposition at the Karo La, the column crossed the pass and camped next day at Nagartse Jong, on the shores of the Yamdok Tso, that strange ring-shaped lake, whose appearance on the map had so struck me just ten years before in my home in Ireland before I set out on my eastern travels and adventures. Here fresh delegates from the Dalai Lama met us, and two prolonged conferences took place on two successive days, each lasting over three hours. I was by now getting fairly well seasoned to these interminable discussions, but to the last they remained something of a strain. The Tibetans are voluble and indefatigable talkers. Each delegate in turn considered it his duty to address the Commissioner in a set speech, recapitulating all the old arguments and pleading the Tibetan cause with force and passion. The first time I heard one of these speeches at Kamba Jong I found it impossible to follow half of what the speaker said, and I had constantly to appeal to my Tibetan assistant to elucidate difficult points. The speakers delivered their addresses with extreme rapidity, and in a low, monotonous, continuous gabble,

without check or pause, and their flow of speech would continue sometimes for fifteen to twenty minutes at a time. Tibetan is at all times a difficult language to follow. It is in its essence monosyllabic (although by custom and usage most words have become dissyllabic), and a single syllable may mean half a dozen different things according to its tone (or rather I should say according to the *emphasis* placed upon it); and the nuances discriminating between these different sounds are so slight that often to the European ear they are totally imperceptible, and the true significance has to be gathered from the context. Then the construction of a sentence is almost word for word the exact reverse of an English sentence, the verb occurring at the end, with or without the negative particle (which when it occurs is slipped in almost inaudibly and without any special emphasis) as the case may be, and one has to listen with strained and unremitting attention to ensure not missing the vital syllable which governs the whole sense of the passage.

Gradually, however, as my ear became habituated with constant practice, I could follow these long discussions without difficulty, helped perhaps now and then by a whispered word from my Lama secretary who stood or sat behind me, and much aided also by the explanatory gestures invariably employed by the speaker. The Tibetans make great use of gestures in conversation, but they are restrained and dignified gestures, each one of a precise significance, in contrast with the more florid and exaggerated gesticulations to which we are accustomed in the case of certain Continental peoples. The tip of the thumb protruded slightly between the first and second finger, for instance, signifies a very small quantity (whether of material things or of abstract qualities, such as kindness, etc.); the knuckles placed back to back denote discord or enmity; the interlaced fingers unity or friendship; and there is a very simple and easily divined method of ex-

pressing the idea of corporal punishment. It is a very real help to understanding the speaker to sit quietly and watch his hands as well as listen to his speech, and one soon finds oneself imitating him as a support to one's own feeble verbal utterances.

Then there is the additional complication of the "shé-sa" or honorific language, which is used when addressing or referring to persons of superior rank, and which possesses an almost complete vocabulary of its own—the words for everything relating or belonging to the person addressed or referred to all being different from those employed in ordinary conversation with equals or inferiors.

Metaphor is much used also, little examples being introduced here and there to illustrate or bring out a point; and these at first are not always easy to follow. I have already quoted the Kamba Jongpen as saying that "you may flick a dog once or twice without his biting, but if you tread on his tail he will turn and try to bite you, even if he has no teeth." A common expression often made use of by the Tashi Lhunpo delegates when acting the part of mediator as between us and the Tibetan Government was to compare themselves to a little bird trying to intervene between two wild yaks fighting. During the Conference at Lhasa the Regent, referring to the proposed indemnity from the Tibetan Government, said "it did not pay to overload a donkey, as he might lie down and die under his burden." To which Colonel Younghusband replied (in allusion to the proposal to pay the indemnity by annual instalments) that "the donkey would only be asked to carry one load at a time until the whole quantity was removed"; and so on. And such little interchanges of wit and epigram often gave a pleasanter and more genial note to meetings which might otherwise have ended in sullen silence or vain protestations and mutual irritation.

So, wearisome as these discussions sometimes were with the endless repetition of the same argument over and over again, they nearly always terminated in a friendly way and with cordial handshaking and good wishes; and it became an interesting and even an amusing occupation to study the different speakers and their modes of expression. And there can, I think, be no doubt that, although there was little apparent result from all these interminable conversations, the British Commissioner's courtesy, good humour, and good sense as experienced personally by the various delegates who came to see us, and as reported by them to Lhasa, prepared the way for us at the capital, and materially assisted in bringing about the conclusion of the Treaty within six weeks of our arrival there.

But all these discussions, interesting and useful as they were as a means of clearing the air, did not affect the movements of the Column. It had now been definitely decided that any new Treaty with Tibet was to be signed at Lhasa, and to Lhasa we meant to go. The military difficulties (such, for example, as supply and transport questions and the possible opposition we might meet at Lhasa) were admittedly not inconsiderable, and they loomed perhaps a little too large in the view of our Military Commander. There were times when it seemed that the military escort might be unable to support the Civil Commissioner in the policy that he was carrying out under the orders of the Government; but in Colonel Younghusband we had a very strong, as well as a very sagacious and patient leader, and all such obstacles to our progress were firmly met and the advance continued. It lay through scenery of weird and wonderful beauty, along the shores of the turquoise-hued lake, across a high mountain chain forming the southern watershed of the Brahmaputra (the Tsang-po), from the summit of which we obtained some wonderful views.

I remember looking north from the crest of these mountains across the valley of the Tsang-po below us into the maze of mountains beyond, amongst which lay the still invisible city of Lhasa, and realising the extraordinary remoteness and inaccessibility of this sacred and mysterious capital. Here we were, after hundreds of miles of travel and adventure, and after having surmounted physical obstacles and difficulties unique in military history, and our goal was still separated from us by a great river and hidden in a labyrinth of mountains.

We reached the banks of the Tsang-po, and remained camped here for a few days, while the force was being ferried across in pontoon boats. And it was during this process that we suffered an irreparable loss by the death of Major Bretherton, our Chief Supply and Transport Officer, an old friend of mine from Gilgit days—a man of indefatigable energy, to whom must be attributed a large share of the credit for our ever having reached so far. He was drowned by the overturning of a Berthon boat, and his body was swept down the river and never recovered.

It was a great day for us all when we first sighted Lhasa—the Potala Hill and Palace—and especially to those of us who had for so many years worked and striven and hoped with this end in view, and we could hardly realise that it was really true that we were actually within sight of, and fast approaching the capital of Tibet. Mr. White was the oldest veteran of us all. Ever since 1886 he had been connected with the Tibetan frontier, and had had dealings with the Tibetans, and had suffered under their obstinacy and procrastination. He and I since 1895 had often worked together, and we had of course discussed the possibility of our ever entering Tibet and reaching Lhasa, and often and often we had nearly despaired of ever being able to realise our ambitions.

“Well, O’Connor,” he said to me, “there it is at last,” and we rode alongside each other in silence. There was

not much more to be said, but it meant a great deal to us both: the end we hoped, and as it proved, of years of petty squabbling, and of petty annoyances and insults on the Sikkim frontier, and the humiliation of being debarred from intercourse with the great, strange, fascinating country just across our borders; and the inauguration of better relations—a new chapter of frontier history in fact.

We arrived at Lhasa on the 3rd August, and we left on the 23rd September, after a stay of just over seven weeks—a short space of time into which to cram a good many momentous events and experiences. Here again I must refer to Sir Francis Younghusband's and Mr. Landon's books for diplomatic and topographical details. My own time was pretty fully occupied with the negotiations which preceded the signing of the Treaty. I was in fact hard at it from morning till night. Innumerable interviews and formal discussions followed one another in rapid succession every day. Besides the Tibetans themselves, there were the Chinese Amban and the Nepalese representative, both of whom helped us in many ways, and the latter especially was indefatigable in his capacity of mediator. In this he was, of course, carrying out the instructions of his master, the Maharaja of Nepal, Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jang, who throughout proved himself to be our most true and loyal friend, and who was untiring in his efforts to bring the Tibetans to their senses and to induce them to meet our reasonable and moderate demands.

The Dalai Lama, alarmed by the approach of our troops, and uncertain as to what treatment he might receive at our hands, left Lhasa a few days before our arrival. He fled north with a few followers, and we never saw him, but I shall relate farther on in these reminiscences how I met him a few years later at Peking, and talked things over with him and his adviser, Dorjieff. In his place he had deputed as Regent a most delightful

old gentleman, a high dignitary of the Buddhist Church, the Ti Rinpoche, the holder of the "Divinity chair" in the monastery of Gaden. It was a fortunate choice. The old man was of a gentle, courteous character and disposition. He was highly respected throughout Tibet for his learning and saintliness, and it was no doubt partly owing to his influence with the more hot-headed fanatical section amongst the monks that we ever got the Treaty signed at all.

The task which confronted the British Commissioner was one of quite extraordinary difficulty. We had already had experience of the obstinacy and dilatoriness of the Tibetans, and of their unwillingness to discuss any outstanding questions with us in a reasonable manner, and now that we had arrived at the capital, where we had hoped to be in touch with the head of the Government and his responsible advisers, we found that the ruler had fled, and had apparently left neither instructions nor authority to anyone as to how the crisis should be dealt with in his absence. All was confusion, and when the first impressions created by our arrival had abated a little, there were signs that the monk element, at any rate, was as unregenerate and stiff-necked as ever.

And whatever was to be done had to be done quickly. There were strong objections from the military point of view to our remaining in Lhasa through the winter; and if the force was to be marched safely back to India before winter set in, the time at our disposal was severely limited. There were differences of opinion as to the exact length of time for which it would be safe to remain at Lhasa, but it was generally agreed that it would be undesirable to postpone our departure beyond the end of September at the latest (the military authorities put it at the 15th September), which left us only seven or eight weeks to negotiate and to conclude our Treaty. It was difficult to see how any persuasion or argument could effect such



a miracle; and the use of force, besides being repugnant to us all, would probably have been futile, as it would merely have resulted in all the responsible people fleeing from the capital in imitation of the Dalai Lama, and we should have been left worse off than ever.

Colonel Younghusband, however, set to work on the problem with his usual tact, firmness, and sagacity. Besides our direct dealings with the Tibetan representatives, he had means of bringing pressure to bear on the Tibetan Government through three very useful intermediaries, namely, the Chinese Amban, the representative of the Nepalese Government, and the Tongsa Penlop of Bhutan, all of whom (for totally different reasons no doubt) did their best to assist us in arriving at a settlement. The terms of the Treaty had already been drafted under instructions from home, and it was a part of my duty to prepare the Tibetan drafts and to keep them up to date, with any alterations which had to be made from time to time during the course of the negotiations. The difficulty was to find the equivalent terms for the various technical expressions used in a formal document like a Treaty, and to translate such phrases as "breaches of treaty obligations," "effective opening of the Trade Marts," "mortgaging Tibetan territory," and so on; but with the help of my invaluable Lama, I think we managed to get the sense correctly, although sometimes only by means of considerable circumlocution. Besides this I was, as usual, constantly busy interviewing all kinds and classes of Tibetans on all sorts of matters, settling the petty disputes between the military and the people of the country, and visiting the monasteries, etc., when I had any spare time.

The negotiations ran their usual tortuous course. We were met at first by a complete *non possumus*, and things looked very black for a few days. Then the efforts of our various intermediaries, Chinese, Nepalese, and Bhu-

tanese, began to bear fruit. The Ti Rinpoche proved himself a most sensible old gentleman, and he, too, exerted a moderating influence on the hotheads and extremists. Gradually a settlement came into sight, and on the 1st September Colonel Younghusband felt that matters had gone far enough for him to put his foot down, and to deliver an ultimatum. A final meeting was arranged on this day at the Chinese Residency, at which the leading members of the Tibetan Government were invited to attend, and after a preliminary address by the British Commissioner the final draft of the Treaty was presented to the Tibetans. They took it away to consider, and on the 4th September the Ti Rinpoche accepted the terms and affixed his seal to the draft.

The principal cause of delay in securing the acceptance of the Tibetans to the terms of the Treaty was the matter of the indemnity. The other provisions were so obviously fair, and indeed to the manifest advantage of the Tibetans themselves (such as the opening of Trade Marts, for instance), that after the usual arguments and explanations reiterated *ad nauseam*, they accepted them with perfect cheerfulness. But they boggled a good deal at having to pay an indemnity. H.M. Government had left the amount to the discretion of the Commissioner, but with the proviso that it should not be more than the Tibetans could pay in three years; and after careful enquiry, as far as was practicable, into the resources and revenues of the country, Colonel Younghusband had fixed the amount at 75 lakhs of rupees or £500,000 sterling; and under the terms of Article VII, as dictated from London, we were to remain in occupation of the Chumbi valley "until the indemnity has been paid, and until the Trade Marts have been effectively opened for three years, whichever date may be the later."

This of course implied that the Tibetan Government would have to pay 25 lakhs of rupees a year for three

years, and this they declared it was utterly beyond their power to do; and they themselves suggested that they might be allowed to pay off the indemnity at the rate of 1 lakh of rupees a year, which process would have taken seventy-five years to accomplish; and according to the terms of the Treaty we should have been entitled to remain in occupation of the Chumbi valley all that time. Colonel Younghusband, after careful consideration, accepted this proposal, and it was so embodied in the provisions of the Treaty. It was this Article which excited the strong disapproval of H M Government, and which was afterwards modified by them, as I shall describe farther on. They were at this time in negotiation with Russia regarding a number of outstanding questions, and they were reluctant to allow the comparatively unimportant matter of Tibet to stand in the way of the settlement of more urgent problems. They had already assured Russia that we intended no permanent occupation of Tibetan territory, and no doubt the Article by which we were entitled to occupy the Chumbi valley for seventy-five years gave an appearance of trying to evade this assurance by a piece of ingenious trickery.

This, however, was not the Commissioner's object in inserting this provision. His duty was to secure the acceptance by the Tibetans of a sum as indemnity which he believed they could pay; and, indeed, this actual amount had been suggested in a communication from the Government of India. If the Tibetans preferred to liquidate their obligation by annual payments spread over a number of years, there was no reason why we should object to their doing so; and it always lay in the power of H.M. Government to reduce the amount, or to relinquish the security for payment. In fact, as a matter of common sense, it was clearly better to secure more than we wanted rather than to risk getting too little. In the first case the Government would be placed in the agreeable position

of displaying generosity should they wish to do so; whereas in the latter, once the Treaty was signed, it would have been impossible to increase the severity of its terms. In his "India and Tibet" Sir Francis Younghusband has explained very fully the considerations which influenced him in arriving at his decision, and although the whole question is long dead and buried, it still has an intrinsic interest as a human document and as an example of the difficulties and responsibilities which may confront an agent at a distance from his Government and with no telegraphic communication (for it must be borne in mind that the nearest telegraph office was at Gyantse, some 250 miles away), and in the circumstances of the case decisions had to be made without awaiting authority from Government.

Another vexed question which afterwards gave rise to trouble was that of a representative at Lhasa. Here again H.M. Government had cut the ground from under our feet by pledging themselves to Russia not to establish an agent at Lhasa—the one and only obvious and essential place for an agent if we were to have one in Tibet at all. Knowing the importance of this point, and foreseeing that it would certainly arise again before long, Colonel Younghusband secured from the Tibetans a separate letter to say that they would have no objection to the British Trade Agent at Gyantse visiting Lhasa from time to time if there should be any commercial question of importance to be discussed. This left the desired loophole for escaping from the impasse, and avoided the necessity of cutting ourselves off from the capital altogether, and the arrangement was at once accepted by the Tibetans without any difficulty. This agreement was not included in the Treaty but annexed to it as a separate document.

All was now ready for the formal signature. Trilingual copies of the Treaty were carefully prepared in

English, Chinese, and Tibetan, and the ceremony was fixed for the 7th September to take place in the Potala Palace. It was a memorable occasion. A large audience hall in the Potala was selected and accommodation allotted to about 400 persons—British and Indian officers and men, Chinese, Tibetans, and Bhutanese. The Treaty was read aloud in three languages, after which the seals of both parties were affixed. On our behalf the seal and signature of the British Commissioner sufficed, but to ensure the adhesion of the Tibetan Government with their complicated system of administration, was more difficult, and we finally insisted upon the following seals:

1. That of the Dalai Lama, affixed by the Ti Rinpoche.
2. That of the Executive Council (namely, the four Sha-pes or Councillors).
- 3, 4, 5. Seals of the three great monasteries—Drebung, Sera, and Gaden.
6. The seal of the National Assembly.

After the process of sealing was complete, the British Commissioner made an address to the Tibetans, emphasising the fact that we had only entered their country to ensure observance of Treaty obligations, and had no intention of interfering with their internal affairs or their religion, and expressing a hope for happy and friendly relations in the future. This I translated sentence by sentence into Tibetan, and the Amban's interpreter into Chinese.

The great adventure was finished. We had accomplished the object of our Mission, and a few days later the little force set out on its return march to India amidst demonstrations of great good-will and after a most cordial leave-taking from our late opponents. No British officer was to see Lhasa again until the visit of Sir Charles Bell in the winter of 1921, seventeen years later.

In this very brief account of our Mission to Lhasa I have purposely refrained from dwelling upon the many controversial points which arose during and subsequent to the negotiations of the Treaty. All this aspect of the Mission has been very thoroughly threshed out in the works already quoted. And besides this, as I have stated in the preface of this book, it is not my intention in writing these reminiscences to revive ancient controversies, or to resuscitate—

*“The flaccid tissues of long dead issues  
Offensive to God and mankind.”*

But I shall have something more to say regarding the subsequent course of events in Tibet in later chapters.

## CHAPTER IV

### A YEAR IN TIBET

(1905)

UNDER the provisions of the Treaty of Lhasa a new "Trade Mart" was to be opened at Gyantse to which British subjects were to have free access, and I was appointed the first "British Trade Agent" at the Mart. The whole arrangement was in essence an elaborate piece of camouflage. H.M. Government had never particularly liked Lord Curzon's forward policy in Tibet and had only grudgingly consented to the dispatch of a Mission, and they had been gradually compelled by force of circumstances to sanction our advance to Lhasa stage by stage; and while the Mission was actually in progress they had tied their own hands by certain pledges to Russia. Their chief desire, once the Treaty was signed, was to get out of the country as quickly as possible, and to try and assume an appearance of never having been there at all. It was an ignominious and an illogical attitude. However much they may have disliked the Tibetan adventure, the hard facts of the case remained and could not be altered. It is no use trying to ignore accomplished facts, and Governments as well as individuals have to face the consequences of their actions.

In pursuance of this policy they had hesitated to carry out the proceedings to their natural conclusion, and to leave a representative at the only place where a foreign representative can be of any real use: namely, at the

capital of the country; and they had compromised by posting him at the new Trade Mart at Gyantse. And it was carefully emphasised that his functions were to be commercial and not diplomatic.

So there I found myself suddenly dropped like a pelican in the wilderness at the dreary little town of Gyantse, situated at an elevation of over 13,000 ft. on the Tibetan plateau, 100 miles beyond the Himalayas and 250 miles from Lhasa. I said good-bye to Colonel Younghusband and all my good friends of the Mission and escort, and away they went to India to disperse to the four corners of the globe, and I settled down in my new abode with a medical officer and a small escort (75 men, I think) of the 40th Pathans.

But we first paid a visit to the Tashi Lama at Shigatse. It had been arranged whilst we were at Lhasa that a small survey party should proceed up the Tsang-po (Brahmaputra) to explore its sources, and to solve the problem of the outlet of the Mansarowa Lakes, etc., under charge of Colonel Ryder, accompanied by Captain Rawling (already well known for his exploration in Western Tibet) and Lieutenant Bailey.

I accompanied this party as far as Shigatse, sixty miles north of Gyantse. After the stress and strain of the Mission to Lhasa, this journey was a delightful little picnic. The autumn weather in Tibet is quite perfect—bright sun all day, blazing in a sky of a blue which we never see in Europe, and fresh crisp mornings and evenings and cool nights. Tibet is an arid country (very like the Persian plateau in general appearance) with a very light rainfall, and the only cultivable areas lie along the banks of the rivers, where they are served by irrigation channels, all fringed with willows and poplars. At harvest time the banks of any of the bigger streams afford a bright and cheerful scene. One rides along through fields of yellow crops (chiefly barley and wheat)



by the side of the irrigation channels, through the little villages and hamlets with their cheery laughing inhabitants who come out and grin at you and put out their tongues in amiable salutation. All were as friendly as could be. The military stage of the Mission was over. We were on our way to visit their beloved Tashi Lama, and not a trace of ill-will remained amongst these simple good-humoured people.

We reached Shigatse on the fourth day after leaving Gyantse, and were met by emissaries from the Lama (including my old friend Badula of Kamba Jong days) some miles from the town, and were conducted ceremoniously by them to the abode set apart for us, a delightful little two-storied summer-house in a garden on the outskirts of the town, not far from the great monastery of Tashi Lhunpo.

We were the first Europeans to visit Shigatse for 121 years, the last having been Captain Samuel Turner, who arrived at Tashi Lhunpo in September of the year 1783. Warren Hastings, whilst Governor-General of India, sent two embassies to Tibet, the first under Mr. George Bogle, of the Bengal Civil Service, who reached Tashi Lhunpo in 1774, and the second under Captain Turner. Accounts of both of these Missions have been published—that of Bogle in Sir Clement Markham's most interesting book, "Tibet: Bogle and Manning," and Turner's in his own "Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet."

Next day we paid our formal visit to the Lama in his summer residence. We were shown up a steep flight of steps into the audience-hall, where His Serenity was seated on a raised throne at one end with his councillors and chief prelates standing on his left. After bowing and greeting the Lama, we took our seats on chairs prepared for us on his right. A brief formal conversation followed, the Lama speaking in gentle, subdued tones and

asking after our health and comfort. He then went on to say that our visit to Tashi Lhunpo was especially welcome to him, as he had received our predecessors over one hundred years ago when deputed by the Governor-General of India to visit him, and he was glad to renew so old a friendship with representatives of the British Government. In saying this he, of course, identified himself with his predecessors in the office of Tashi Lama, as he and everyone in Tibet firmly believe that the spirit of which he is an incarnation is transferred at death to a new-born infant; and that, therefore, although presenting a different exterior in each fresh incarnation, the essential spirit and personality are the same.<sup>1</sup> And after a few more conventional remarks we took our leave.

The Lama was at this time a young man of twenty-two to twenty-three years of age, of modest and simple demeanour, and kindly gentle manners. He was much beloved by his entourage, and idolised by all the inhabitants of the country. His position was a peculiar one in the Tibetan polity. In point of sanctity this incarnation takes rank not inferior to that of the Dalai Lama, and is indeed actually superior in the complicated hierarchy of Buddhist metaphysics. But his temporal power was limited to the province of Tsang, and even so was subject to the over-lordship of the Lhasa Government. He had his own little court and government, his chief minister, his treasurer, his chamberlains, and so on, all in miniature, but analogous to the Lhasa system; and he was the supreme head of the great Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, with its 3,300 monks.

I was to have further opportunities of studying the whole curious system during the months I spent at Shigatse in the following year. On this occasion I only

<sup>1</sup> This paragraph serves merely to give in popular terms a conception of the complicated Buddhist doctrine of what we call "reincarnation." It is not to be regarded as a scientific definition.

stayed a few days I had one or two audiences with the Lama in a little private room, where we sat cross-legged on cushions, and drank buttered tea out of jade bowls with golden saucers and covers, and we laid the foundations of a friendship which has lasted ever since. Then the exploring party went off up the Tsang-po, and after a farewell audience with the Lama I returned to Gyantse to take up my life there.

My first official duty was not a very pleasant one By this time the text of the Treaty had been sent home, and H.M. Government had immediately taken exception to the unfortunate Article about the indemnity and the seventy-five years and the occupation of the Chumbi valley, and also to the letter giving the British Trade Agent access to Lhasa. They were of opinion that these provisions were not in accordance with their declared policy and their arrangements with Russia, and that some modifications were called for; and they also held that the British Commissioner by securing these terms had exceeded or transgressed his instructions. A good deal of sympathy was felt for Sir Francis Younghusband, who had certainly discharged his difficult and arduous duties to the best of his ability, and who had wrested from the Tibetans by sheer force of character a Treaty much better than any of us could ever have hoped for—and, indeed, if they had chosen to turn sulky or obstinate, we should never have made a Treaty at all. It was the more gratifying, therefore, to Sir Francis Younghusband himself and to his many friends and admirers when some years later he was decorated with the K.C.S.I. by another Secretary of State for India.

All this, however, was no affair of mine. All I had to do was to translate and transmit to Lhasa the messages from the Government of India conveying the instructions of H.M. Government, namely, that the indemnity was to be reduced to 25 lakhs and the Chumbi valley evacuated

after three years, provided the first three annual instalments had been duly paid and the provisions of the Treaty observed in other respects. And the Lhasa Government was also informed that we did not propose to take advantage of their agreement regarding possible visits to Lhasa of the British Trade Agent at Gyantse.

I now settled down to life at Gyantse. We still remained in occupation of our old Mission post, a large country house belonging to one of the Tibetan noble families which we had commandeered during military operations, but for which we now paid rent. There were two blocks of buildings: the larger, an old, ramshackle, two-storied house surrounding a courtyard, was utilised for barracks, offices, store-rooms, etc.; and the other, a comparatively new and nicely decorated garden-house, also of two stories, where I took up my abode, with my medical officer, Captain R. Steen of the I.M.S., than whom it would have been impossible to find a more cheery or congenial companion. As Tibetan houses are quite destitute of fireplaces, and as winter was now setting in, we built ourselves a small mess house tacked on to the main building with a large open fire-place, bow window, etc., and we borrowed a carpenter from our friend the Tashi Lama, and set him to work to make us furniture—and some very remarkable furniture resulted from his efforts.

It was now getting pretty cold, but the climate was not nearly as disagreeable as we had expected. At night the temperature sank pretty low, but the mornings were nearly always fine, sunny, and still up to about noon, when a bitter wind would spring up, carrying clouds of dust, and it became intolerable out of doors. So we adapted our life to the prevailing conditions, and took our exercise in the morning between nine and twelve. Polo on little shaggy Tibetan ponies, football, and a little shooting kept us fit, and I personally never found the day long

enough for all I wanted to do. I continued my Tibetan studies, and began notes on manners, customs, and superstitions, and collected more folk-tales. All my servants (except for one faithful little Gurkha who had been with me since I was a subaltern at Darjeeling) were Tibetans, and when I had exhausted their stock of stories (and one or two of them were famous raconteurs) they had orders to seize and lead before me anyone believed to have a new tale; and it was most amusing to see some bashful yokel or monk led up solemnly to tell his story. I always had an audience on these occasions, as the presence of other Tibetans and their hearty appreciation of the good points were a great help to the story-teller, and soon put him at his ease.

Tibet is a perfect mine of good stories, and I only wish that I had been able to record more. But many of the best (in fact the majority) were too much in the nature of "smoking-room stories" for publication, and I have had to suppress them. One or two of the best of these, by the way, I found again in Persia under a slightly different form some years later. One of my servants was the son of a highly respected magician who lived in the neighbourhood, and who made a good living by dispelling hail-storms which seemed likely to gather and destroy the crops, and this youth also possessed the necessary paraphernalia, and now and then officiated on the roof of the house when black clouds seemed threatening near our vegetable garden. He also possessed an interminable store of stories, but as most of them came from books and obviously Indian sources, they were not so intrinsically interesting as the pure folk-tales of the countryside.

On one occasion I went out to see a funeral, which ceremony in Tibet takes place in the early morning. The corpse, that of an old woman, was carried to the top of a neighbouring hillock, the regular place for the ceremony.



MASQUE IN A TIBETAN MONASTERY



AUTHOR AND DOMESTIC STAFF AT GYANTSE, 1905



As the little procession made its way up the hill numbers of vultures and crows were seen winging their way in from all directions, and when we arrived at the top they arranged themselves in a large expectant circle all round us. The mourners then retired, leaving only the two officiating experts, and an old Lama with a praying wheel, and myself. The corpse was first stripped, and then the chief operator, producing a large knife, began cutting off long strips of flesh, which he threw to the voracious circle of birds. The vultures pounced upon the morsels immediately with hoarse cries and much flapping of wings, and struggled and fought fiercely amongst themselves, whilst the crows cawed and fluttered and hopped here and there picking up what they could. It was not exactly a "before breakfast" entertainment. Very soon every scrap of flesh had been skilfully stripped off, and the skeleton was then dismembered, each bone being crushed between big stones, and, when sufficiently pulped, thrown also to the birds to be devoured, until at last only the skull remained. This, I was told, was generally kept by the relatives, or presented to a monastery to be made into a skull-drum or a drinking cup. In less than an hour not a scrap of the corpse remained. It may not be a pleasant method of disposing of dead bodies, but it is an extremely effective one, and from the Buddhist point of view it presents the additional advantage that "merit is acquired" by the feeding of living creatures. The photograph facing page 110 will give some idea of the proceedings.

From time to time, also, Captain Steen and I attended religious ceremonies and devil-dances at various monasteries. We were always most courteously received, and the monks seemed really pleased to see us, and there was never the slightest trace of fanaticism or religious intolerance. In fact, as I have already tried to show, it is their extreme tolerance, both in social and in religious matters,



which constitutes one of the principal charms of life amongst Tibetans—and I have no doubt amongst other Buddhist peoples as well. It is true that it was the monkish influence which was chiefly responsible for keeping Tibet a closed land for so long, and which constituted the main obstacle to our advance to Lhasa. But this obstruction was due, principally, to the apprehension of the monks that our arrival in the country would prejudice their position and tend to undermine their power. There was no real religious animosity against us, and no fanaticism such as Muhammadans might have displayed, and no questions of ceremonial or caste pollution such as influence Hindus. Once they found that we had no intention of interfering with their religion in any way, or of attempting to undermine the priestly power, they accepted us with perfect friendliness, and I never once encountered the least sign of hostility in any of my visits to their temples and monasteries.

In these visits we witnessed from time to time some really remarkable spectacles. Most of the big monasteries in Tibet enact some religious play once or twice a year, and keep in their store-rooms a complete set of properties. These vary very much in different places. At the great Gyantse monastery, for instance, the *Corps de ballet* included all sorts of weird monsters, skeletons, demons, etc. At Dongtse, down the Shigatse valley, the play was of a more purely Buddhist nature, and the monks symbolised episodes famous in Buddhist history. The setting and stage management of these open-air plays (or rather masques) was most picturesque and effective (see photograph facing page 80). They take place in the great open courtyard of the monastery, the centre and part of one side of which is kept clear as a stage, the remaining space, as well as the roofs and balconies, being thronged with spectators from all the country round. The occasion is always a feast day or holiday, and the brightly



ACOLYTES WITH TEA URNS



TIBETAN RELIGIOUS CEREMONY



dressed crowd makes a pleasant picture, all decked out in their best—the women with their extravagant head-dresses, loaded with seed pearls and turquoises, the men with their gold and turquoise ear-rings, pig-tail brooches, and charm boxes, all cheery and good-humoured and thoroughly enjoying the entertainment. We were generally given seats of honour on a balcony, together with the Abbot of the monastery, and one or two of the local notables, and in the intervals we would move about taking photographs and chatting to the players. A book could be written about these plays and their elaborate symbolism, and the queer mixture of Buddhism and Animism which runs through them, and if I had stayed longer in Tibet I should have attempted it.

On one occasion, also, we attended the great annual open-air service at Dongtse Monastery, when the huge silken scroll is unrolled and hung up with elaborate pomp and ceremony. These scrolls, which form a part of the equipment of most of the larger and more important monasteries, are immense affairs, 20 to 30 ft long, designed very much on the lines of the familiar "tangkas," or painted banners, but generally woven in silk, and displaying one of the Buddhist celestial hierarchy. The photograph facing p. 82 shows one of these huge scrolls suspended, with the rows of monks arranged below it, the two officiating chief priests in all the grandeur of their ecclesiastical robes. The other photograph shows the young acolytes carrying wooden buckets full of buttered tea with which to regale their elders at intervals during the interminable services. This, again, was a very popular ceremony, designed to attract, and at the same time to impress the laity; and indeed the whole thing was most impressive and picturesque, and the stage management admirable and well calculated to emphasise the dignity of the Buddhist Church in general and of the officiating priests in particular.

It will be observed that the Buddhist Church in Tibet is adept in catering for the popular taste. Its whole paraphernalia and *modus operandi*, in fact, seem to be designed with this end in view. It is no doubt a monstrous growth to be imposed upon a poor country like Tibet, but as practically every family has at least one son in a monastery, or working as an official, there can be no serious popular discontent or jealousy; and as described above, the monasteries bring into the lives of the people the one touch of brightness and picturesqueness which is otherwise lacking in this sombre country.

Practically all the art and culture of Tibet is concentrated (just as was the case in Europe in the Middle Ages) in the monasteries, where are to be found quantities of really artistic treasures—some indigenous, such as the wood-carvings, metal work, and paintings; and others of Chinese origin, as, for example, the cloisonné, the porcelain, and the silks. Then, just as in the Roman Catholic Church, the religious services are artfully designed to make a sensuous, as well as a spiritual, appeal to the worshippers, and we find vestments, music, chanting, incense, decorated altars, and images all contributing to the same effect. And, as I have described above, the Church, on festal occasions, provides masques and other entertainments to which the country people flock from miles around. Whatever may be its defects and shortcomings, it cannot be denied that Buddhism, as practised in Tibet, gives colour and romance to the otherwise dull and drab lives of the people, and it is loved and appreciated accordingly.

It must be admitted, then, that for the Buddhist Church in Tibet there is much to be said in its purely religious, and, so to speak, its social aspect. But there is another and less pleasing side of the question, when we come to consider its position in politics. Frequent reference has

already been made to the power of the three great monasteries in the neighbourhood of Lhasa (Drebung, Sera, and Gaden), which contain an aggregate of some 20,000 monks between them. As may be imagined, especially in view of Tibet's peculiar system of government under a pontifical ruler, these great collegiate establishments so near the capital necessarily exercise a very marked influence on the policy of the country, both internal and external. We had frequent illuminating proofs of this all through the course of our Mission, from the first day we crossed the frontier up to the signature of the Treaty. And in actual contact with the representatives of the "Sen-De-Ge-sum" (the three great monasteries mentioned above) we found them to be as stiff-necked, narrow-minded, and bigoted a set of ecclesiastics as one could well imagine—men evidently of strong character, self-made, and animated by all the arrogance induced by ecclesiastical authority—a type with which we are familiar from the portraits of so many of the great Priest-Statesmen throughout British and European history. The authority of the great monasteries has been to some extent curbed by the present Dalai Lama, but must always remain an important element in Tibetan politics, and will have to be taken into account in all our dealings with the country.

As spring came on and the weather became milder we travelled farther afield, exploring the countryside for miles around, inspecting the monasteries and villages, and paying visits to neighbouring county families. We were received everywhere with kindness and hospitality, and we took part in the local sports, archery, and so on, and gave many little entertainments in return. It was amusing to entertain a mixed party of monks and laymen at lunch, to show them pictures and photographs, and to play the gramophone for them. I also possessed a phonograph, and used to manufacture Tibetan records (songs,

and music) for myself. Every Tibetan sings more or less, and we began our collection with the performances of our own staff of retainers; and it was a great sight to watch their faces and those of their companions when the machine first reproduced their efforts. They never tired of this, and when, at the close of a performance, I would announce only "one more song," and asked whose it should be, there was an immediate and general response in bashful tones of "Mine, please."

I had another source of occupation, too, in road-making. The Government of India had sanctioned a small sum to be expended on the repair of the roads between Gyantse and Phari at the head of the Chumbi valley, a distance of about 100 miles. I determined to utilise these funds to the best advantage in making a track fit for wheeled vehicles (of which, by the way, none existed in Tibet at that time, but which I proposed to introduce). The greater part of this track lay over an undulating tableland requiring little or no constructional work, but there was a difficult gorge (the "Red Idol" Gorge) some miles from Gyantse, where a considerable amount of rock blasting and revetment had to be done. I put sections of the road out on contract to neighbouring villages, and paid only by results, and the consequence was that I got my road satisfactorily and cheaply completed within a very short time, and was able to drive a small motor-car all the way from Phari to Gyantse when I returned from leave the following year.

During the early summer the question of the Tashi Lama visiting India was first mooted. Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales (now Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary) were coming to India during the ensuing cold weather, and it was proposed to invite the various independent and protected Potentates of the north-east Frontier to meet them

at Calcutta. These included the young Maharaja of Sikkim, our friend the Tongsa Penlop of Bhutan, and to represent Tibet there was no one in the absence of the Dalai Lama more suitable than the Tashi Lama. I was asked my opinion regarding the proposed visit, and I replied that its acceptance would almost certainly involve the Lama in trouble with the Chinese and possibly with the Lhasa Government, and that in the circumstances it would not be fair either to him or to ourselves to invite him unless we were prepared to guarantee him some measure of protection afterwards. This message, unfortunately, through some misunderstanding, never reached the Government of India, and shortly afterwards I received instructions to proceed to Tashi Lhunpo and to invite the Lama to visit India during the ensuing winter to meet Their Royal Highnesses.

Captain Steen and I accordingly proceeded down the valley to Shigatse in lovely summer weather. The crops were ripening, and the whole valley was bright and green, and in sharp contrast to the bare brown hills on either side. We were lodged on arrival in the same little house which I had occupied before, and here we remained for a couple of months whilst things were being arranged. Some diplomacy was necessary to carry the matter through. I first communicated the invitation confidentially to the Lama at a private interview. He was delighted with the idea, and said he would certainly come, but it would have to be very carefully and tactfully arranged, so as to avoid opposition from amongst his own staff and people; and the whole thing would have to be kept secret from the Amban and the Lhasa Government until the last possible moment. So he begged me not to deliver the formal invitation to him until a few days before it was necessary to start, and in the meantime he would prepare the ground locally. He first confided in his Chief Minister (Gyab-Ying), a very stout



and jovial monk with a huge cranium, a great talent for affairs, and a strong character, and like all his entourage devoted to the Lama. This portly and capable cleric, although somewhat doubtful as to the wisdom of the step, could not resist the young Lama's pleading, and at once became an accomplice, and together we arranged the outlines of the plot; and others of the Staff, as well as trustworthy prelates of the great monastery, were taken into his confidence, and told to prepare the ground gradually.

Meanwhile I spent perhaps the most interesting two months of my life amongst these fascinating and friendly surroundings. I used to see the Lama once or twice a week in his private apartment, where we sat and chatted by the hour about all things under the sun. Everything almost was new to him, and he took a child's pleasure in hearing of strange customs and countries. I had brought with me a number of illustrated books showing countries, cities, animals, and peoples of the world, mechanical inventions, railways, steamships, etc., etc., and he pored over these with unceasing interest and taxed my stock of Tibetan to the utmost to afford him adequate explanations of it all. I bought him a camera and a gramophone, which also afforded him much innocent amusement. It was all such a revelation to him, and such fun, living as he did a cloistered life and utterly shut off from all intercourse with or knowledge of the outside world.

The Tashi Lhunpo Monastery, which we visited on several occasions, is a huge conglomeration of buildings, arranged in tiers on a hillside, and very similar in general appearance and plan to the big monasteries which we saw at Lhasa. The bulk of the buildings consists of the monks' dwelling-houses—plain, barrack-like stone structures of two or three stories—but the most important and characteristic features are the tombs of five previous

Tashi Lamas, which rise over the mass, and are conspicuous by their gilded domes. They are richly decorated and ornamented, and contain a quantity of valuable objects of art, amongst which are to be found some beautiful specimens of Chinese cloisonné. The monastery contains nominally 3,300 monks, and is divided into four sections, or colleges, each under its chief Abbot, and provided with an elaborate hierarchy of officials.

We also visited the Ne-tang printing establishment, situated a few miles out of Shigatse, where a great part of the Tibetan literature is printed. Tibetan printing (introduced from China) is performed by means of carved oblong wooden blocks, each block representing a page, and of these blocks there are thousands, carefully stored and catalogued, including editions of the standard Tibetan scriptures, the Ka-gyur (108 volumes), and the Teng-gyur (225 volumes).

We had many social entertainments, too, receiving much hospitality from local notables, like my friend Badula and relatives of the Tashi Lama. There was also a minor Chinese official stationed at Shigatse, a pleasant, cultivated man, who gave a large luncheon-party in our honour, and regaled us with many strange dishes. In fact, we had a very interesting and pleasant time altogether, and every day enabled me to gain some further insight into Tibetan manners and customs, and to increase my small stock of knowledge regarding the country and its inhabitants. As I remarked before, the special fascination and interest about life in Tibet was to find oneself suddenly set down in the midst of an almost entirely unknown form of civilisation. It was no mere savage tribe of mountaineers or half-developed primitive State, but a most elaborate and highly organised country, with a system of government, manners, customs, laws, etc., which owe little to any outside sources. It is true that

Chinese and Indian inspiration could be traced here and there, as, for example, in matters of dress, art, etc., borrowed from China, and, of course, the Buddhist religion itself and the alphabet which came direct from India; but the essentials of their life and polity are purely indigenous, and possess characteristics peculiar to the country and unique in themselves.

However, the time was now at hand for the formal delivery of the Government of India's invitation, and the occasion was carefully stage-managed in consultation with the Lama and his Chief Minister. I made a formal request to the Lama for an interview, and was received ceremoniously in his Hall of Audience, where I communicated to him the invitation from the Government of India to visit India in order to meet the Heir Apparent of the British throne and His Excellency the Viceroy. The Lama expressed his thanks, and said he would discuss the matter with his Councillors before replying definitely. Immense local excitement then ensued—endless conferences and movings to and fro. Such a step was utterly unheard of. How could the Lama leave his country? Every kind of misfortune would inevitably ensue, and probably he would never return. All these and a hundred other objections, valid and absurd, were urged by the old-fashioned elements. But the ground had been carefully salted, and in the end the Lama's wishes prevailed. He pointed out the importance of being on good terms with Tibet's powerful neighbours, the British, and how, since the conclusion of the Treaty at Lhasa they had shown themselves well disposed to Tibet and so on; and a day or two later the Chief Minister called to notify me of the Lama's acceptance.

The important thing now was to hurry him off before the Chinese Amban had time to learn about what was in the wind and to put a spoke in our wheel, so the day of departure was fixed only a week ahead, and preparations

for the journey were pushed on apace. The question of His Serenity's suite, however, still remained to be considered. I asked the Chief Minister to discuss the matter with the Lama and his Council, and to let me have a list of persons whom he regarded as indispensable to His Serenity's <sup>1</sup> comfort, but I begged him to keep it within the smallest limits possible, as there would be difficulty and expense in moving about a large party of Tibetans in India. The Chief Minister promised to let me have the list on the following day. Just after he left me I received a telegram from the Indian Government expressing gratification at the forthcoming visit of the Lama, and adding that they trusted that he would reduce his suite to the smallest possible number owing to transport and other difficulties, and suggesting thirty as a suitable limit.

When the Chief Minister came to see me next morning he had a large roll of paper in his hand, and my heart sank as he unfolded it and explained that this was a list of the Lama's proposed following. He said he had gone into the matter very carefully, and although there had been protests, and a number of persons had been eliminated who ordinarily accompanied the Lama on his journeys, he had borne in mind my request, and had succeeded in keeping the total down to a little over 1,000.

I had expected something of the kind, and was not unduly shocked, but it seemed rather difficult to reconcile the two estimates. However, we compromised eventually on 300, which, although it diminished the Lama's entourage by two-thirds, had the merit of being only ten

<sup>1</sup> There was some little difficulty in devising a suitable title for Lama. "His Holiness" was suggested, but discarded as likely to infringe upon certain existing prerogatives, and the Government of India finally fixed on "His Serenity" as the best substitute in the circumstances.

times greater than the maximum fixed by the Indian Government.

These, however, were petty and sordid considerations, out of place when dealing with living divinities.

I will record the events of our journey in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TASHI LAMA'S VISIT TO INDIA

(1905-1906)

THE departure from Shigatse was a picturesque and imposing affair. Dense crowds had collected to see the Lama start, and they lined the road for miles on either side. The Lama himself travelled in a sort of sedan chair, carried by bearers dressed in a peculiar costume, and he was preceded and followed by an interminable array of monks and laymen, riding in single file on their little thick-set shaggy ponies, all dressed and caparisoned in the weirdest fashion. The Tibetans love bright colours, and although the monks had to confine themselves to their sombre claret-coloured robes, they made up for lack of variety by the most amazing headgear, whilst the laity were gay in brilliant silks and so on. All had coloured saddle-cloths, and ornamental bridles and cruppers, and rows of jingling bells around the ponies' necks. The servants wore the regular Tibetan livery—a claret-coloured robe with bright red sash, big, flat-topped hat covered with crimson silk threads, which fell in a deep fringe all round, Tibetan boots of gaily-coloured cloths, long turquoise and gold ear-ring in the left ear, and a turquoise and gold locket on the pigtail behind! So we made a brave show as we jingled along in the bright Tibetan sunshine.

But by far the most interesting part of the whole affair to me was the dismay and the concern displayed by the

poor simple people of the country. The news of the Lama's impending departure for India had of course spread abroad, and from far and near they flocked in from their farms and villages to see him pass. Our whole route for the 150 miles from Shigatse to near the Tang-la pass was lined at intervals by these poor souls—at times, near the larger towns and villages, in considerable numbers; elsewhere, dotted here and there in small groups. They dreaded and feared the departure of their beloved Lama. There was no precedent for any previous incarnation visiting India, and there were dismal forebodings and prophecies that he would never return. All along the road they had lighted little fires of juniper and other sweet-smelling herbs and branches, and we rode all the way in the savour of incense. I was amazed to see the devotion of the people at the passing of the Lama. As his chair was sighted in the distance, all prostrated themselves and bowed their heads to the ground, and as he got near they would press forward to try and so much as touch the trappings of his palanquin, many with tears streaming down their cheeks.

It is not, perhaps, always realised how great a part emotion plays in all religions. The Roman Catholic Church, expert in all phases of human nature, thoroughly appreciates and caters for this, and Tibetan Buddhists, whether consciously or unconsciously, do the same. The Christian religion in general, of course, bases its appeal to humanity on the humanity of its great Founder; but here in Tibet the Incarnate Deity appears to his worshippers in living human shape, passes amongst them, speaks to them, and blesses them. It is impossible to conceive a more irresistible appeal to the emotions and sensibilities of mankind.

The Lama was cheerful, but inclined to be rather nervous. He thoroughly enjoyed his journey, the adventure and novelty of it, the incense and worship of the

people, and the thought of seeing India and its holy places. He peeped out through the curtains of his chair, smiled, and blessed his worshippers with his hand as he went along. I constantly rode or walked beside him and chatted to him. His camp where he spent the night was an elaborate affair—hundreds of tents, large and small, those of his own immediate entourage surrounded by a canvas wall to secure privacy. His living-tent was circular in shape, very like a Khirghiz *yurt*, with a light wooden framework covered with felt, and lined throughout with leopard skins. Everything was in duplicate, and when one camp was completed in the morning, it was instantly packed up, loaded on mules, donkeys, and yaks, and hurried on to be pitched two stages ahead, so that there was always a camp ready for him to occupy on arrival.

We arrived at Gyantse on the fourth day, and here we heard that the news of the Lama's departure had reached Lhasa, and excited the rage of the Chinese Amban, who strongly resented any feudatory of the Chinese Emperor taking it upon himself to visit a foreign country, and to make the acquaintance of a foreign prince, without the authority of his suzerain lord; and it was rumoured that he was sending an armed force to stop the Lama. This was very much what we had expected, and we decided to push along as quickly as possible to the Chumbi frontier. It was getting cold now, and a piercing wind blew through the gorges and across the wind-swept plateaus that we had to traverse on our way to Chumbi. We all wrapped ourselves in furs, with fox-skin caps to cover our heads and ears.

I quote from my official Diary:

17th November, 1905.—We were all up and had breakfast before daylight and started off with the Lama, as per appointment, just after it was light. We were all muffled



up to the eyes in furs and every kind of wrap we could put on, but as we went at a walking pace it was impossible to warm one's blood properly, and the cold at this hour was intense. I rode alongside the Lama, with Captain Steen following a short way behind with the Minister and the rest of the cortège—abbots, cup-bearers, etc., etc.—extended behind us. After an hour the sun began to give out more heat, and as we rode along the shores of the Hram Lake I enjoyed one of the most perfect mornings I have ever known. The lake was in a great measure frozen over, but the ice was rough and tumbled, and blue patches here and there showed springs or warm currents. South of us lay the beautiful snowy ranges, culminating in Chu-mo-lha-ri, which marks the frontier between Bhutan and Tibet, and above all shone the clear, blue, Tibetan sky, cloudless and serene. Not a breath of air stirred, and we soon threw off our furs and moved along more briskly, the Lama laughing and chattering like a schoolboy, and asking me a thousand questions.

*18th November, 1905.*—... The whole population of Phari—men, women, and children—turned out to see the Lama arrive, and I have never seen the religious emotion more strongly manifested than it was by those poor grimy Buddhists. When the holy yellow chair appeared in sight, men and women alike began to sob and pant with excitement and fervour, and tears rolled down their cheeks. Only the greatest exertions on the part of the lictors and servants, and the free use of their heavy whips, kept the Lama from being mobbed by his worshippers.

*21st November, 1905.*—We halted for the day at Lingmatang. The Lama held his court with the usual ceremony in his Darbar tent, and hundreds of the villagers came to receive his blessing. They attached, one and all, an immense importance to the ceremony, and many of them said to us afterwards: "We have heard all our lives of the Holy Lama, the Precious All-wise, of Tashi Lhunpo, but we never expected to see him with our own eyes and to obtain his blessing. Now even our little children have seen and been blessed by him."

From Chumbi we continued our journey to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, across the Nathu La pass. The Lama, who had now changed his chair for a pony, dismounted and walked the last few hundred feet to the top of this pass, as he was feeling chilly. I noticed he wore no furs, and asked him how in the world he managed to keep warm. He smiled, and lifted the fringe of his silk robe, and showed me layer after layer of beautiful silks. He had on, if I remember rightly, no less than seven silk outer garments besides silken underwear below. He said he never felt really cold, but got a little stiff sometimes when riding or sitting in his chair.

We were now across the frontier within the limits of the Indian Empire (Sikkim being a native State feudatory to the Indian Government), and we were warmly greeted by the Maharaja and his son, my young friend the Kumar, who entertained the Lama whilst I stayed with Mr. White, the Political Agent. We only halted at Gangtok one day, and pushed on quickly to Darjeeling, where I had telegraphed ahead to have the Drum Druid Hotel reserved for the party. All the hill people were agog with excitement at the arrival of the Lama, and deputations met us all along the road with offerings and greetings, and a large procession of devout Buddhists escorted him into Darjeeling. Here we spent two or three days making our arrangements for the tour in India. The Lama held a formal reception every day in a big hall in the hotel, and blessed the hill people who filed before him in an unending stream. He was immensely interested in all he saw, especially his first sight of European ladies, some of whom attended his receptions.

There was a little difficulty over the electric light the first night. Noticing a light burning in the Lama's sleeping apartment rather late, and hearing a good deal of talking and moving about, I asked permission to enter,

and on doing so saw his young brother standing on a chair in the middle of the room industriously puffing away at the central light with a pair of bellows. The poor things had been unable to get the lamps to go out, and the Lama could not get to sleep in the blaze of light. I explained matters, and left them happy, and we had a good laugh over it next day.

It was now arranged that the Lama's first objective should be Rawal Pindi, where the Prince and Princess would be present at a big review of the troops under Lord Kitchener; and from there also he could visit Taxila, a place famous in the history of Buddhistic India. So special trains were arranged, and on the 2nd December we started on our travels by rail. It was, of course, quite impossible to carry along with us the whole of the 300 followers, so it was arranged that some thirty to forty should accompany the Lama on his tour, whilst the remainder, with the hill ponies and all sorts of paraphernalia, proceeded to await us at Calcutta. Besides the Lama's own staff, the Maharaja Kumar of Sikkim accompanied us, and also Mr. Laden La, of the Darjeeling Police, a highly educated and most intelligent young man of mixed Tibetan and Lepcha parentage, who spoke English and Tibetan equally well. He and the Kumar were invaluable throughout the tour, as hitherto I had been obliged to do all the interpreting myself. We also received an acquisition in the person of a Bengali savant, Mr. Satis Chandra Vidyabhusana Mahamahopadhyaya, who had made a special study of Sanskrit, and of the literary Tibetan, in which he was thoroughly well versed, and was therefore peculiarly well qualified to guide and instruct the party in all matters connected with Buddhistic India, whence Tibet had derived its religion and its scriptures.

Our start was not very auspicious. The train journey down the little hill railway from Darjeeling to the plains upset the Lama's interior economy (a very common ex-

perience), and it was with some difficulty that we induced him to continue the journey from Siliguri Railway Station at the foot of the hills. At Katihar Junction he was still unwell, so much so that we halted here for twenty-four hours; and a very harassing and anxious time it was for me. There was no place where he could be lodged with any comfort, and we were obliged to keep him in the station waiting-room, continually disturbed by the shunting and whistling of trains and engines, although the station officials did their best to reduce the noise to a minimum. Captain Steen, to whom the Lama was much attached (as indeed were all the Tibetans), remained with him continually, and he soon recovered. It was probably more his nerves, and the great change of climate and elevation from the Tibetan plateau to the plains of Bengal, that affected him rather than any actual physical ailment. To our great relief he was soon well enough to proceed with the journey. We crossed the Ganges, to the joy of the Tibetans, to whom, as well as to Hindus, it is a sacred river, and we travelled comfortably by broad-gauge lines to Rawal Pindi without further adventure.

But, even so, it was no light undertaking to be responsible for the conveyance through India of a large party of Tibetans, including an Incarnate Lama, none of whom had ever left their country before. Having all their lives been accustomed to the diet peculiar to Tibet, of which the staple is "tsampa," or coarse ground barley-meal, it was impossible to switch them off all of a sudden on to European or Indian food, and we had to carry with us a large supply of "tsampa" and a variety of other rather extraordinary and in some cases odoriferous comestibles—such things, for example, as the dried uncooked carcasses of sheep, and skins of butter, which keep admirably (for years even) in the cold climate of Tibet, but which are not suited for carrying around in a railway train in

India, even in the cold weather; and a good many precious delicacies of this nature had to be discarded after a day or two.

We found that there was little trouble with the laymen of the party, who would eat and drink pretty well anything which Messrs. Kellner & Co. provided for them; but the monks, including the Lama, were more finicky, and special care had to be taken to cater for their peculiar likes and taboos. The Chief Minister, who as I have already said was a corpulent person and evidently in the habit of doing himself well, carried a considerable cargo of Tibetan dainties with him for his private delectation. This was all very well, but one day the guard of the train came running to me to say that the Minister was indulging in culinary operations over an open charcoal stove in his saloon carriage, and he feared that the train would be set on fire. I had some difficulty in persuading the Minister to put a stop to this proceeding, and he evidently thought we were a fussy lot to worry about trifles of this sort.

We arrived at Rawal Pindi at 2 p.m. on the 7th December, and immediately on arrival I received a message from Their Royal Highnesses' Private Secretary to say that they would like to see the Lama as soon as he was rested from his journey. We drove down to the Royal Camp the same afternoon, where the Lama was shown at once into Their Royal Highnesses' reception tent. Here he was most kindly received by the Prince and Princess, who shook hands with him, and invited him to be seated between them whilst I interpreted. Both the Prince and Princess showed a great interest in the Lama, and questioned him closely about his manner of life in Tibet, his impressions of India, etc., etc. It was a curious scene, and one which has remained firmly fixed in my memory; the quiet little recluse from his distant Tibetan home, believing himself

and believed by millions of Buddhists to be a veritable Incarnation of the Divine, who had never spoken to a woman (except his mother) before in his life, sitting and conversing with the Heir Apparent to the English Throne and the Princess of Wales. However, he comported himself with the perfect dignity and simple courtesy which were natural and instinctive to his refined and gentle character.

Our next interview was with the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, who also received the Lama most kindly, and we had a very pleasant little chat with him.

This was the first occasion that I had met Lord Kitchener. I had seen him at Delhi during the Darbar in 1902, and he had personally approved and sanctioned my deputation to Sikkim on special duty, but I had not spoken to him before. I was struck, as so many of us were when he first came to India, with his charmingly courteous manner, and the great interest he displayed in all sorts of affairs (especially of a political nature) outside his own immediate military sphere. I was to meet him frequently afterwards during his term of office in India, and again for the last time when he was Consul-General in Egypt.

A day or two later the great review took place. The Lama and his suite drove there in carriages, and we were well placed near the saluting base, and had a good view of everything. There were some 53,000 troops present, and it was a very fine spectacle, especially for these simple people who had never seen more than a few hundred picturesque ragamuffins armed with swords, bows and arrows, and ancient muzzle-loaders, collected together at one time. It was during the march past that the numbers present really began to impress themselves on the Lama's imagination, and I heard afterwards that he had sent two of his secretaries to slip round to the back of the parade-ground to make sure that it was not the same men

marching round and round in a circle in order to create an effect!

Before leaving Rawal Pindi, we made our first pilgrimage to a Buddhist sacred spot, Taxila (the ancient Takshasila), a famous centre of Buddhism in the time of the Emperor Asoka. We travelled by rail to Serai Kala station, where we were met by Rajah Jehan Dad Khan of Kanpur, on whose property the site of the ancient Taxila lies, and we proceeded thither, the Lama in a chair, and the rest of us riding all sorts of little undersized country-bred ponies. I quote from my Diary:

10th December, 1905 — In addition to the Rajah himself and his various male relatives we found his picturesque escort of mounted lancers awaiting us, so it was a quaint motley array which set out to visit the holy spots—Tibetan lay nobles with their turquoise earrings, silk dresses, and long pigtails, smug-faced monks with shaven heads; followers in all kinds of strange garbs never before seen in India, fierce warriors, bearded Ghakkar horsemen, a Bengali Pandit, very uncomfortable on a squeaking stallion; and the two or three Europeans in *sola topees*. It was a fine if not orderly cavalcade, and must have numbered a hundred persons.

We examined the ruins, and our expert friend, Professor Satis Chandra, expounded to us what is known of the history and origin of the place, and the Lama and his higher monk officials were greatly interested in it all. From their sacred books they were well acquainted with the name and sacred traditions of Taxila, and they were delighted to have the chance of making a pilgrimage here—the first Tibetans who had ever done so as far as we knew. They examined the place carefully, and made some small votive offerings, and burnt incense and lamps. We were then hospitably entertained and garlanded by the Rajah, and returned as we had come to Rawal Pindi.

From here we went on and did some conventional sight-seeing at Agra and Benares, and from the latter place visited the famous Buddhist centre of Sarnath, where a great "stupa" commemorates the spot where Buddha first "turned the wheel of the law" This is one of the four sacred places of pilgrimage for Buddhists in India and well known to all the Tibetans by tradition, and they fully appreciated its sanctity and interest. They spent several hours here burning lamps and incense, and the Lama, seated as Buddha on a ledge of the stupa, held a special service Great merit was acquired here even by the humblest and the poorest of the party, as they were all able to circumambulate the stupa many times, and to burn their small lamps in honour of the Founder of their religion.

And so we came to what was really the culminating point of the pilgrimage, Buddh Gaya, the very spot where Buddha, after meditation, "obtained enlightenment"; where in fact the Buddhist religion may be said to have originated In the course of the decay and practical disappearance of Buddhism in India, this place came into the hands of the Hindus, and is now a well-known place of pilgrimage for Hindus as well as Buddhists, and is consecrated to Vishnu, who is regarded as an Avatar of Buddha

In spite of this rather anomalous state of affairs, however, Buddh Gaya was still holy ground for the Tibetans, and they much appreciated this opportunity of visiting a place so full of sacred traditions for them, and so well known to them from their scriptures and from Buddhist lore and allegory They circumambulated the sacred buildings and made offerings and burnt incense

The Shrine is under the religious charge of a Hindu Mohant (priest guardian), who made special arrangements for the reception of the Lama and entertained him hospitably during his stay.



I quote again from my Diary:

19th December, 1905.—At 8 a.m. the special train reached Gaya station, where we found carriages awaiting us and two saffron-clad monks to give the Lama the Mohant's greeting and invitation to be his guest during the stay at Buddh Gaya. We accordingly drove out towards the shrine with the two *chelas* acting as outriders, and when within one mile of Buddh Gaya we were met by the Mohant himself, accompanied by a crowd of followers, and with palanquins and elephants to carry the Lama and his officers to their lodging. We halted and dismounted from our carriages, and after greeting the Mohant, the Lama was conducted to a silver chair, and borne in state to the Mohant's guest-house. As he moved forward the procession formed up, and we advanced in great state—a Hindu band led the way, followed by the palanquins of the Lama and the Mohant, and the elephants which carried the principal officers and priests; whilst in front and behind and on both sides moved a dense crowd of Hindu priests and miscellaneous natives, carrying flags and garlands, and cheering heartily. The Lama and his whole following were soon ensconced as guests of the Mohant in the guest-house, whilst the British officers and the Maharaja Kumar took up their quarters in tents nearer to the temple.

21st December, 1905 —At eight this morning the Tashi Lama, carried in his sedan chair, and surrounded by his entire following, proceeded to the temple. Here he entered, and after a short prayer held a service in the shrine. When this was concluded he walked round the temple and took his seat upon Buddha's throne just between the Bo-tree and the building. Here, after a period of meditation, he held a small formal reception, receiving scarves and other offerings and bestowing his blessing upon all who passed before him. The British officers who accompanied him were present on this occasion, and were accommodated with seats on his right hand, and amongst those who obtained the Lama's blessing were the Japanese Military Attaché, Major Higashi, and various Ceylonese, Burmese, and Indian Buddhists.



THE TASHI LAMA AT SHIGATSE 1905



[Johnston & Hoffmann Ltd, Calcutta

THE TASHI LAMA AT A GARDEN PARTY GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA  
1905 TO MEET H R H THE PRINCE OF WALES (NOW H M KING GEORGE V)  
*Left to right* Capt R Steen I M S Author the Tashi Lama, Lama's Chief Minister  
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After a brief interval for refreshment the Lama resumed his seat by the Bo-tree and held a solemn service, wherein he ordained various candidates to the priesthood, and raised some priests from a lower to a higher degree.

Few more interesting scenes can have been witnessed in India than this of Buddha's earthly representative and the reflex of Buddha's spiritual father (as the Tashi Lama is deemed by the Tibetans) seated upon Buddha's own seat and holding a solemn service at the ancient shrine of Buddh Gaya, where Buddha himself obtained enlightenment more than two thousand years ago.

As it happened, Mr. Perceval Landon, who had come out to India in the suite of the Prince of Wales, was at Buddh Gaya at the time, and it was pleasant to meet him again still surrounded by Tibetans, although in such different circumstances. He has given a vivid and picturesque account of the Lama's visit to Buddh Gaya in his "Under the Sun."

We now proceeded to Calcutta, where the Lama and some of his suite occupied Hastings House, whilst the remainder camped in the park round about. The Maharajas of Bhutan and of Sikkim were also accommodated in houses near-by, so the north-east frontier of India was well represented.

We spent just over a fortnight in Calcutta altogether, and it was a busy time. Besides the usual official functions—formal visits to and from the Prince of Wales and the Viceroy—the Lama also attended such social functions as a Garden-party at Government House (see photograph). I even took him to the Races one day, where he thoroughly enjoyed himself. He was rather nervous at first when entering crowded places, and generally Captain Steen and I led him by the hand, one on each side, but he thought it all great fun, and was pleased to meet interesting people, and to see so many new types, and to study our manners and customs.

The Buddhist community at Calcutta also held a reception for the Lama, where he was presented with addresses, and presided over a religious service.

This closed our visit to India. I had applied for and been granted leave home, and Lieut. Bailey was appointed to act for me at Gyantse, and I handed the Lama over to him at Siliguri Railway Station on the 13th January. It was a melancholy occasion. We had grown attached to one another during all these latter months, and the poor Lama shed tears at parting. It was the last I was to see of him. I have received many letters and messages from him since, but we have never met again.

I insert a last quotation from my Diary of the Lama's visit to India :

. . . I should like to remark, in conclusion, that one of the most interesting aspects attending the Lama's visit to India was the respect and veneration with which he was everywhere received by natives of all castes and of all religions. It is true that after leaving Darjeeling he was no longer actually worshipped as a veritable god on earth, but his reputation as a holy man and a saintly personage in his own country secured for him throughout Hindustan extraordinary manifestations of regard, and he was received by Muhammadans and Hindus alike with a respectful enthusiasm very gratifying to witness and very creditable to the religious tolerance and innate delicacy of feeling of the natives of India. Wherever we went the people of the country, high and low, seemed thoroughly to appreciate the peculiar position of the Lama, and nothing could exceed the delicate courtesy of our various entertainers and the care which was taken in no way to hurt the feelings or to injure the prestige of the Holy Lama from Tibet.

I was detained in Calcutta till the end of March, squaring up accounts connected with the Lama's journeys, and also to meet a Tibetan delegate who came down from Lhasa to pay the first instalment of the indemnity as

reduced by H.M. Government. This he did by handing us over a cheque signed by a representative of the Chinese Government for  $8\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs of rupees—one-third of the total amount to be paid—which, of course, reduced the whole thing to a farce in so far as the obligations of the Tibetan Government under the Treaty were concerned.

I was glad enough to leave India. I had not been out of the country since I first landed at Bombay in February 1895, just over eleven years before, and although I had enjoyed every moment of it and never had a dull day, I had undergone a good many experiences and hardships, and been subjected to pretty nearly every extreme of temperature during the interval—from the hot weather at Dera Ismail Khan to a winter spent at Tangu! And I found that, after living for nearly three years continuously at elevations of over 11,000 ft. (most of the time over 13,000 ft.), there was a strong reaction on returning to sea-level, especially in a relaxing climate like that of Calcutta. But it was worth it all to arrive home in an English spring. I think most of us Anglo-Indians remember most vividly of all our experiences when we return home on leave the first train journey from Dover or Folkestone to London through the lovely Kentish scenery, more especially if it is springtime and the fruit blossoms and primroses are out.

I had several interviews with Lord Morley (or rather Mr. John Morley as he was then) at the India Office. He was most kind to me personally, but he made me realise that H.M. Government were not enthusiastic about Tibet, and had no intention of involving themselves in any undesirable obligations or responsibilities in those parts. I lunched with him one day at his house at Wimbledon, and we talked it all over, and after discussing Indian frontier politics he showed me some of his treasures—George Meredith's writing-table, and

necessary for another twenty miles or so, when we reached the open plain on which stands Phari Jong.

The next stage over the Tang La was easy enough. ~~All~~ this part of the country consists of open rolling downs, and once across the pass we were on the road which I had had repaired and improved during the previous year. The only difficulty which we had to contend with now was the weakening in the power of the cars due to the rarified atmosphere. The poor little "Baby" was so reduced by this that at any extra steep slope I used to jump out and run alongside, steering with one hand on the wheel, whilst my native chauffeur similarly ran and pushed on the other side. As we reached the crest of the ridge we both sprang in again without stopping the car, and continued gaily down the reverse slope. And once across the Tang La it was delightful to drive along (at the terrific speed of 15 to 20 miles an hour—the utmost we could manage) over the great Tuna Plain, where we had sojourned so wearisomely two years before. Behind us towered Chumolhari and the other great Himalayan peaks, and our route led us alongside the beautiful Hram Tso Lake, now partially frozen over. The cold at night was intense, and we had to be careful to empty our radiators every evening, and it was no easy matter starting in the morning. The Lama's car gave some trouble, but the little Peugeot ran well, and did her best amidst these strange surroundings.

I found matters a good deal changed at Gyantse. The Chinese, in spite of the laxity and apparent inefficiency of their system of government, have always displayed an amazing tenacity and persistence in anything concerning their prestige in their outlying provinces.

In the case of Tibet, although our intervention in that country was forced upon us solely owing to Chinese inability or unwillingness to compel her feudatory to observe the elementary rules of international law and inter-



FIRST MOTOR CAR IN TIBET (BABY PEUGEOT AT GYANTSE, 1907)  
(Gyantse Jong in background )



TIBETAN FUNERAL  
(See page 81 )





national etiquette, and although we had carefully refrained either from occupying or annexing Tibetan territory (except for the purely temporary occupation of the Chumbi valley) or interfering in any way in the internal administration of the country, China, nevertheless, intensely resented our having gone to Lhasa, and there having entered into direct relations with the Tibetan Government, and concluded a treaty with them. There is no doubt that, whatever attitude the British Government might have adopted towards the Tibetan question subsequent to our withdrawal from Lhasa, the Chinese would, sooner or later, have taken steps to restore their damaged prestige, and to regain "face"; but when they saw that not only was the British Government (whether Conservative or Liberal) very lukewarm about the whole business, but even prepared apparently to acquiesce in the restoration of Chinese authority in Tibet, they not unnaturally set to work at once with great vigour to establish themselves on a really sound and stable basis, and to neutralise as far as possible any privileges or influence which we might have secured as a result of our Mission.

It had all along been intended that our Treaty with Tibet should be regularised by securing China's assent to its provisions, and as this was not possible whilst we were at Lhasa, the Chinese Government sent a very astute diplomatist, Mr. Tang Shao-Yi, to India to negotiate an "adhesion agreement" with the Government of India. Negotiations between Mr. Tang and the Indian Government took place during the year 1905, but proved abortive, partly owing to Mr. Tang's obstructive tactics, and partly to the Indian Government's lack of experience in dealing with Chinese diplomats; but in April 1906 an agreement (similar in every respect to that which had ended abortively in India) was signed in Peking by Sir Ernest Satow, the British Ambassador, and Mr. Tang. By this instrument our Lhasa Treaty was formally confirmed by

both Governments, and Great Britain agreed not to annex any Tibetan territory or to interfere in the administration of Tibet.

These were the principal provisions of the agreement, and they might appear innocent and innocuous enough. They were, however, sufficient to enable the Chinese officials in Tibet to inaugurate a campaign against our interests with the object of rendering nugatory our treaty rights, and of re-establishing China as the suzerain power. An emissary of Mr. Tang, Chang Yin-Tang by name, was appointed Amban, and proceeded to Lhasa *viâ* the Chumbi valley, making himself as objectionable as he could to British officers *en route*, and proclaiming everywhere to the Tibetans that the Lhasa Treaty was abrogated by agreement between the British and Chinese Governments, and that the Chinese had returned to take over the conduct of all Tibet's foreign relations—and so on. At Gyantse Mr. Chang left a subordinate official, by name Gow, who immediately set to work to make all the trouble he could for us locally. He was exceedingly rude to Lieutenant Bailey, who was acting Trade Agent, and he accused us and our employés of seizing supplies by force and not paying for them, and of other misdemeanours; and he instructed the local Tibetan officials to communicate with us only through him. I refused, therefore, on arrival to have anything to do with him, or to call upon him, until he had apologised for the insulting language used to Lieutenant Bailey.

It was all a storm in a teacup, a mere diplomatic incident, which reverberated for a time through the Foreign Offices of the Governments concerned, and then died away. But it was symptomatic, both of our failing position in Tibet, and of China's determination to reassert herself—very natural in the circumstances, although it was rather trying to the man on the spot (especially when he had been so closely connected with our whole policy in

Tibet as I had) who had to stand by and see the results of our Mission being gradually whittled away. It was not, in fact, a very pleasant position. Our former friendly social and official relations with the Tibetans were entirely interrupted, not from any lack of good-will on their part (they were still as friendly as ever and perfectly ready to continue on good terms), but they feared the Chinese, and I was not in a position to give them much encouragement as I anticipated that I should not be backed up by my own Government. We made diplomatic protests, of course, but there was not much heavy metal behind them, and they produced little effect. Mr. Gow, it is true, was eventually recalled from Gyantse, and given a better post elsewhere, but it was perfectly clear what the general attitude of H.M. Government was, and I soon realised that I was in a false position, and that any active work in Tibet was over, at any rate for the present.

It was about this time that Dr. Sven Hedin suddenly appeared at Shigatse from the wastes of Northern Tibet. I never met him, but we had a long and amicable correspondence. At this time we were all very well disposed towards Sven Hedin. We admired his pluck and enterprise; and he had received much encouragement and assistance from the Indian Government. I did what I could to help him now, sending him money, supplies, etc., and he soon started off again to finish his exploration of the regions lying north of the Brahmaputra. He has since made himself sufficiently notorious by his record during the war. One can make allowances for pro-Germanism (after all, his admiration for Germany's military organisation was natural enough), but no Englishman can ever forgive or forget the tone of sickening sycophancy to Germany which pervades his book on the war, and his vituperation of and sneers at British and Indian troops.

However, my Tibetan experiences were nearly at an end. It was arranged that a tripartite discussion should take place at Simla between the Chinese and the Tibetan delegates and the Indian Government, with the object of drawing up new Trade Regulations as laid down in Article II of the Lhasa Treaty, and I was ordered to Simla to assist Sir Louis Dane, the Foreign Secretary, who had been deputed as British Commissioner for this purpose. The Chinese representative was Mr. Chang, who came down from Lhasa, bringing with him the Tibetan delegate (the Tsarong Shapé), and a motley following of Chinese and Tibetans.

The negotiations which ensued lasted from August 1907 to April 1908. It was rather a painful, and, as it turned out, quite abortive affair. Mr. Chang very soon tumbled to the fact that we had no backing from our own Government, and proceeded to exploit the position for all it was worth. He began by presenting us with a perfectly preposterous draft, and we spent the best part of the next eight months wrangling over its clauses. The Chinese and Tibetans all lived together, in a little country house a few miles out of Simla, and most of our meetings took place there, although once or twice they came to the Foreign Office at Simla. They were very obstructive, and far from friendly in their general manner and behaviour—the poor Tibetan delegate being nothing more than a figurehead and entirely under the thumb of his Chinese colleague. We were fighting a losing battle, and the Chinese were perfectly well aware of the fact, and did not spare us. The proper course for us to have pursued would have been to throw up negotiations altogether as soon as we found that the Chinese were taking up an impossible attitude, and that the Tibetan delegate had been reduced to a cypher. We had nothing to lose by so doing, as we still had a sufficiently comprehensive charter of rights and privileges under the terms of our

Lhasa Treaty, and of the 1890 Treaty, and the 1893 Trade Regulations, all of which still held good, and we clearly had nothing to gain by continuing these undignified haggings with an obstinate and intransigent Mandarin. But it was considered desirable to come to some kind of conclusion, and so the farce went on. The Government of India moved to Calcutta (this was before the days of Delhi as a capital) in due course in the autumn, and our assorted little party followed in their train, and we continued our discussions there.

Finally, Sir Louis Dane (who had meanwhile been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab) had to go off, as he was taking leave home before joining his post, and the new Regulations were signed immediately afterwards by Mr. Wilton (who had again been deputed to India as our Chinese expert adviser and interpreter), Mr. Chang, and the Tibetan delegate. They were of a totally unsuitable nature, and I protested strongly at the time against their acceptance; but the attitude of H.M. Government was decisive, and they were concluded accordingly. But as they were never brought into force, and were abrogated a few years later, it did not really matter much. Still, it was a painful and humiliating proceeding from beginning to end, and I was glad when it was all over.

This finished my official connection with Tibet. It had been a wonderful experience, and one which I had very thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. From the day when I first arrived at Darjeeling, and saw the snowy rampart which separated Tibet from India, and met the quaint, good-humoured, picturesque Mongoloid-featured Tibetans on the road and in the bazaars, I was attracted to the country and its problems; and I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to satisfy my ambition and curiosity in actually seeing Lhasa, and in living, if only for two or three years, in the heart of the country.

Its interest and charm more than fulfilled my expectations, and my chief regret in leaving was that there was still so much to be done and so much to be discovered which I could now never hope to accomplish.

From the point of view of my political work, however, I was not sorry to be transferred elsewhere. The impulse, originated by Lord Curzon, which had taken us into the country and carried us as far as Lhasa, had subsided. New personalities had come upon the scene both at home and in India, who regarded the whole of the Tibetan policy as a mistake and a nuisance, and those who had been most prominently identified with it were naturally regarded askance, and could no longer expect support. The tendency was to let things drift, and if the Chinese wanted to re-establish themselves in Tibet, well let them do so, so long as we incurred no risk or responsibility. This policy, in fact, prevailed during the next few years, and there is little doubt that but for the advent of the Chinese revolution in 1911, which produced certain rather dramatic reactions in Tibet, Chinese authority would have been by now firmly re-established all over the country, and our influence reduced to a minimum.

At any rate, it was now decided that I should leave Tibet, but before being posted elsewhere I was deputed to proceed to England to meet the young Maharaja Kumar (Heir-Apparent) of Sikkim, who was completing his studies at Oxford, and to conduct him round the world *via* America, Japan, China, etc., back to India. Bear-leading was an occupation for which I had no special inclination or aptitude, but it is always interesting to travel and to see new countries, and I was not unwilling to get away for a time from Indian frontier politics. I reached England in May 1908, and got into touch with my little friend the Kumar, who was still at Oxford, and we made up a programme for our journey. The Kumar,

by name Sidkyong Tulku,<sup>1</sup> was at this time about twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, a quiet, unassuming, little man. He had been educated partly at St. Paul's School at Darjeeling, and partly by private tutors, before going to Oxford, and the groundwork of his education was far too slight to enable him to derive any real intellectual benefit from the University; but he had made friends there and acquired a knowledge of English life and manners which he could have got in no other way, and he was certainly the first Incarnation of Buddha who had ever even attempted a University course. We attended King Edward's Garden-party at Windsor Castle in July, where there was a brilliant gathering of Indian Rajas. Here I was introduced to the Prime Minister of Nepal, Maharaja Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jang, who with his staff and some of his family was visiting England at that time, and whom I was to know so well in later years. On the 8th July we left Liverpool in the *Mauretania* (the next time I saw her was also at Liverpool in April 1918, looking a strange object in her camouflage as we passed her in the Mersey on our way across to America).

We stayed at the Waldorf Hotel at New York, and spent a few days sight-seeing, and endeavouring to dodge interviewers. Our visit happened to coincide with one of the periodical outbursts of Anglophobia which used to enliven the American press in the bad old days before the war; but as it made not the slightest difference to us personally, and as we were greeted with the greatest kindness and hospitality wherever we went, it was all rather amusing. This particular outbreak owed its origin to some absurd disputes in connection with the Olympic games (a prolific source of international heartburning), and especially to some incident in the tug-of-war between the American and British teams, of which I forget the

<sup>1</sup> "Tulku" is the Tibetan for "Incarnation."



exact merits, but which turned upon the species of foot-gear worn by the contending parties; and I recollect a really amusing cartoon of the British Lion, shod with enormous hobnailed boots, being ignominiously dragged backwards by the tail by a smiling and debonair Uncle Sam, at whom the Lion is snarling over his shoulder.

My little friend the Kumar was, of course, immediately hailed as an Indian "Prince," and we suffered the usual plague of interviewers, one of whom contrived to thrust himself into the Kumar's bedroom one morning just as he was getting up, and we were regaled the same evening with a charming description of "Indian Prince in Pink Pyjamas." It has always been a mystery to me how the American public, which possesses and apparently appreciates the best monthly periodicals in the world, can tolerate some of their really appalling daily papers.

From New York we ran up to Montreal, then visited Niagara, and so *viâ* Chicago to the Grand Canyon and San Francisco. It was a hurried rush, and there was much that we had to leave undone and unseen, but our time was limited, and the hearts of both of us were set rather on Japan and China than on America, and our programme was framed accordingly. San Francisco was still at this time arising from the throes of the earthquake of two years before. Many great buildings were still heaps of ruins, but the new city was even then practically rebuilt, and when we saw photographs of what it had been immediately after the earthquake, the progress made in two years seemed absolutely magical. Here we were joined by an Oxford friend of the Kumar's, Mr. G. A. Buchanan, who had arranged to accompany us as far as Peking, and on the 11th August we sailed for Yokohama.

The voyage across the Pacific was calm and uneventful. We touched at Honolulu and spent a day or two there, and on the 28th August we arrived at Yokohama. Japan

was naturally a fascinating experience for us all. The Russo-Japanese war was still a memory of the immediate past, and we were glad of the opportunity of studying at first hand the Oriental nation which had stood up to and defeated the colossal European bully which had been India's bugbear for so many years. The Kumar's Mongolian physiognomy, and the fact that he was a genuine Buddhist Incarnation, naturally excited a good deal of interest amongst the Japanese, and we were given exceptional opportunities of seeing the inner side both of their social and of their religious life. We did the conventional sights at Tokio, Kamakura, and Nikko, and paid a short visit to the British Minister, Sir Claude Macdonald, at his lovely summer residence at Chuzenji, and then after a short walking tour from Chuzenji we made straight for Kyoto.

Here I renewed my acquaintanceship with a very interesting Japanese personality, Count Kojui Otani, hereditary Chief Priest of the Nishi Hongwanji sect of Japanese Buddhism. I had first met Count Otani when I was Assistant Inspecting Officer of the Kashmir Imperial Service Artillery in the Gilgit district, some seven or eight years before. He and two of his friends were returning from a visit to Europe, and after traversing Central Asia, they had crossed the Mustagh mountains by the Kilik pass. I also happened to be on my way to India, and we met by chance near the Burzil pass, and travelled together as far as the Kashmir valley, and became great friends. I was much impressed by Count Otani's wide reading and knowledge of Asiatic politics, history, and geography (subjects which had always interested me, and of which I had made a study), but I had no idea at that time what an important personage he was in Japan. We parted at Baramoola, but had kept up a correspondence during the intervening years.

The day after arriving at Kyoto I proceeded to the

Nishi Hongwanji temple, and enquired for Count Otani. An English-speaking priest informed me that it was a festival day of the Buddhist Church, and that the Count was conducting service in the temple; but that, if we would care to witness the service, we could do so, and he would take my card to the Count when it was over. The Kumar and I accordingly entered the beautiful temple, which was crowded to the doors with worshippers, and were given seats at the back. The impressive Buddhist service was in progress when we entered (resembling in many respects the services which I had so often witnessed in Tibet), but I saw no sign near the altar of my friend Otani. But presently there came a solemn pause in the service, a bell chimed, and the whole congregation bowed forward in obeisance, and from behind the altar advanced the High Priest, clothed in the magnificent embroidered robes of a Buddhist Pontiff, and with all the majesty of ecclesiastical and mystical authority. He solemnly took his seat on the Pontifical Chair, and conducted the remainder of the service. It was my friend Count Otani—a very different figure from the young man whom I had last seen in his stained, old shooting-suit, tramping across the Burzil pass down to the Wular lake in Kashmir.

As soon as the service was over, he received us in his private apartments adjoining the temple, dressed in European fashion, and very interested to hear all our news. I noticed that he kept himself well up to date with all the principal English and many other foreign periodicals, and was thoroughly well acquainted with all the news of the day. He presented a curious contrast—the combination in one personality of the modern well-educated and well-read man of the world, and the revered High Priest of an ancient sect of Buddhism, semi-sacred in the eyes of his congregation.

We spent some little time at Kyoto, and under the auspices of Count Otani and his friends we saw all

there was to be seen in very pleasant circumstances. I was especially interested in the educational system, and the Secretary of the Kyoto University very kindly took me in hand, and we visited a number of the schools, from the kindergartens to the normal schools and the University itself, and incidentally made many pleasant acquaintances and learnt a great deal of Japanese social and political life. From Kyoto we visited Osaki, took a trip on the inland sea (which is more like fairyland than anything else on the surface of the globe), returned to Tokio, where we had the honour of being received by the Emperor, and so departed eventually from Nagasaki to Fusan. We travelled up through Korea by rail, spent a few days at Seoul, and so across the Manchurian frontier at the famous Yalu river to Mukden, where we were hospitably entertained by the British Consul.

It was just after our arrival here that the momentous news came of the death of the Empress Dowager. No one seemed to know what this portentous event might involve. There was talk of the possibility of the train services being stopped all over China as a mark of respect, of revolutions, etc., etc., so we thought we had better get through to Peking as quickly as possible, where at any rate it would be better to be stranded than at Mukden in mid-winter. Nothing untoward occurred, however, and our journey to Peking was uneventful. Sir John and Lady Jordan very kindly invited the Kumar and myself to stay with them at the British Legation, so we found ourselves in luxurious quarters, and well situated to hear all the latest news.

The young Maharaja Kumar was greatly excited and pleased at finding himself in Peking at last. Like all Tibetans (and the Sikkimese Buddhists are only provincial Tibetans) he had imbibed from his youth up an immense awe and veneration for the Chinese Court, and indeed for things Chinese generally. The shadow of

China up to the time of our Mission to Lhasa (and indeed, unfortunately, for some years afterwards as I have tried to show) lay heavy over all that part of Central Asia and of our Indian frontier. Chinese colonial imperial methods, although very different from ours, and often, according to our ideas, inefficient and even absurd, are extraordinarily well calculated to overawe and impress the "Barbarians" to whom they are applied. Without any great display of force, Chinese officials know how to create an atmosphere of superiority and power, and to impress upon simple-minded aborigines like the Tibetans the dignity of their Empire and the excellence of their civilisation. In the case of Tibet, and cognate races like the Sikkimese and Bhutanese, these impressions were particularly strongly marked, as all these people of Mongoloid origin have adopted many elements of Chinese civilisation in their daily social life, and ape the Chinese in numberless ways. Anything Chinese, in fact, was the *ne plus ultra* of fashion, and the Chinese Court was literally the abode of the "Son of Heaven." It takes a long time to eradicate, or even seriously to disturb, such deeply rooted notions as these; and even an English-educated youth like the Kumar, who had travelled in Europe and America and seen something of the wonders of modern scientific development, still retained in his heart of hearts a secret and, I think, semi-mystical awe of the Celestial Court and everything connected with it.

In ordinary circumstances it would probably have been possible for the Minister to have gratified this minor Indian Chief by arranging an interview with the Emperor (or Empress), but of course in the circumstances this was out of the question. But as it happened, there was another attraction for him at Peking almost equally if not more potent, namely, the Dalai Lama, who had arrived in Peking the previous September, and was

lodged in the Yellow Temple outside the northern wall of the city—which temple, by the way, had been built originally for the reception of a Dalai Lama who came to Peking in the year 1653 to pay homage to the new Manchu Dynasty. It is curious that the next Dalai Lama to visit Peking paid his homage to the last of the Manchu Emperors.

It was now over four years since the Dalai Lama had fled from Lhasa before the advance of our Mission. He had made straight to Urga, the capital of Mongolia, and the seat of another high Incarnate Lama. Here he stayed for the best part of a year, but as it soon appeared that there was not room for two great Pontiffs in one city, and the superior status of the Dalai Lama was denuding the other both in offerings and reputation, the Dalai Lama wandered off into Kansu, and so gradually to the sacred temple of Wu-Tai-Shan in Shansi. Here he spent several months in 1908, and finally arrived at Peking. He was well and honourably received by the Chinese Government, had an audience with the Emperor and Dowager Empress, and received the British Minister and Staff at a formal visit.

The Kumar was naturally anxious to pay his respects to his spiritual chief, and a visit was arranged accordingly. We were received by the Lama in a hall of the Yellow Temple with very much the same ceremonial to which we were already well accustomed in the case of the Tashi Lama—the Lama seated on a sort of throne at one end of the hall, with some of his chief officials standing on his right hand. After presenting the usual scarves of ceremony, which the Lama received from us himself, the Kumar and I were given seats on his left hand. We paid him two visits. On the first a quite brief and informal conversation took place, but on the second he spoke much more freely, questioning us about the Mission to Lhasa, Great Britain's attitude towards Tibet and him-

self, and especially about the Tashi Lama's visit to India, regarding which he expressed great interest. It was, of course, a great advantage being able to converse with him direct without the intermediary of an interpreter, and the Lama evidently appreciated this, and expressed himself with considerable freedom and animation. He was at this time about thirty-five years of age, and a man of striking and strongly-marked personality—slightly built, his face thin, rather narrow, with dark eyebrows and slight dark moustache, well-shaped features more pronounced than is usual in the Mongolian type of countenance, and having a somewhat saturnine expression when in repose. Altogether a more vivid, and far more formidable, personage than his brother Lama of Shigatse.

His familiar spirit, Dorjjeff, was not present at either of these interviews, but I was to see him before I left Peking in somewhat peculiar circumstances.

Amongst the diplomats of Peking I made the acquaintance of Monsieur Korostovetz, the Russian Minister, who had recently negotiated the Treaty between Russia and Mongolia. The Anglo-Russian agreement, which defined our respective and mutual interests in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet, had been signed the year before, and it was now possible to talk Asiatic politics with a Russian statesman very much more freely than had previously been the case (it made all the difference in the world to our relations with our Russian colleagues in Persia, as I was to find a year later). Monsieur Korostovetz was naturally much interested in anything connected with Tibet, as I was in his Mongolian experiences, and during one of our conversations he asked me if I should like to meet Dorjjeff. I, of course, said I should like to meet him very much. He was still a sort of mystery man to us. We had been hearing his name, and he had been the subject of diplomatic correspondence between the two

Governments at intervals for some years past, and just when we thought we were going to get into touch with him he had fled from Lhasa with the Lama without our ever setting eyes on him.

So Monsieur Korostovetz asked me to come and have tea with him the next afternoon, and there I found Dorjiefï awaiting me. He was a stout, cheery-looking monk of the stereotyped description, about forty-five years of age, a voluble speaker, and evidently a man of intellect and character. He spoke Tibetan and Russian equally well, and so could converse direct with either Korostovetz or myself, whilst Korostovetz and I spoke in French to each other. It was a curious little meeting—to find myself chatting amicably at the Russian Minister's tea-table at Peking with the rather sinister figure whose intrigues had been the chief cause of our Tibetan Mission, and who had disappeared with the Dalai Lama into the wilds of Central Asia just as we arrived at Lhasa. He, for his part, was quite unembarrassed, and chatted away gaily. I took advantage of the opportunity to do a little propaganda on my own account—impressed upon him that the British Government had no quarrel with the Dalai Lama, that our relations with Tibet were settled by the Lhasa Treaty, and that we entertained no sinister designs of any kind on the country; and that if the Dalai Lama intended to return to Lhasa, he would find the British Government quite well disposed towards him, and ready to enter into friendly relations with him within the limitations of our Treaty, and so on.

Dorjiefï said that he would repeat all this to the Lama, and would try to see me again before I left Peking. This, of course, was all in Tibetan, and we did not think it necessary to translate it to Monsieur Korostovetz.

A day or two later Dorjiefï came to see me at the British Legation, and we had a long, private conversation. He told me that he had repeated our last conversation to



the Dalai Lama, and that the latter had been most pleased and interested to hear what I had to say. He had already entered into negotiations with the Chinese Government regarding his return to Lhasa, but he was far from satisfied with the general attitude towards him of the Chinese, and it was clear from their proceedings that they fully intended henceforth to curtail his authority, and to reduce Tibet to the position of a Chinese province. He therefore confidently anticipated trouble after his return, but as long as he was assured that the British Government bore him no enmity for what had happened in the past, he would be prepared to face the future with more confidence.

The Lama, so Dorjjeff went on to say, had been greatly impressed by the visit of the Tashi Lama to India, and by the account which he had received of the Lama's reception there by the Prince of Wales and the Viceroy, and by the general friendliness and hospitality of the Indian Government, whereby the Lama was enabled to tour through India and to visit the various Buddhist shrines, to which all Tibetans attach such great importance and sanctity. The Dalai Lama had already received full accounts of this visit, but it brought it home to him to meet the Maharaja Kumar of Sikkim and myself, who had been the Tashi Lama's companions on his pilgrimage.

I replied that, although I was not authorised to give the Lama any promises on behalf of the British Government, I could nevertheless assure him, as I understood the British Minister had already done, that there was no objection to his return to Lhasa, and that the British Government certainly harboured no enmity against him on account of past events, and that I was sure that they would be prepared to enter into the most friendly relations with him—subject of course to any Treaty limitations by which we were bound.

It was an interesting experience, and I was glad to

have the chance of meeting Dorjjeff personally. Being himself a Russian subject, and having been received on various occasions with marked friendliness by the Emperor himself and by various high-placed officials in Russia, it was natural enough that he should be pro-Russian, and he would no doubt have preferred to see the Dalai Lama cast in his lot with Russia—as indeed he had tried to do. But this having proved impossible, he was clever enough to trim his sails and to steer a new course. As already mentioned, both he and the Lama had evidently been much impressed with the moderation of our policy in Tibet, and especially by the Tashi Lama's reception in India; and no doubt it was these considerations which chiefly influenced the Lama when he made up his mind to flee to India when he was threatened by the Chinese a little more than a year later.

Poor man—the conditions of Asiatic politics in those days placed him in a very difficult position, and he suffered many hardships and trials before he was able to settle down securely once again in his own capital.

This was by far our most interesting experience in Peking. The Chinese political situation was still very obscure, but no serious developments occurred until later. We made the acquaintance of Doctor Morrison, the famous "Times" correspondent, and of other notable personalities. Our travelling companion, Mr. Buchanan, left us here, as he was going on to Australia, and on the 2nd December the Kumar and I set out to visit the famous Buddhist shrine at Wu-Tai-Shan, in the province of Shansi, where the Kumar was anxious to make a pilgrimage. We travelled to Pao-Ting-Fu by train and spent the night at a Chinese inn, and started off on our 150-mile trek the next morning. Preparations for our journey had been made at Peking. We had hired a Chinese interpreter, a cook, and a general servant, purchased the necessary stores, etc., and mules were awaiting

us at Pao-Ting-Fu. Neither of us had travelled before in China, so it was a new experience. We and our servants and our kit were all carried on mules, and splendid mules they were, doing their twenty miles or so a day without difficulty. It was now very cold at night, but the days were sunny and pleasant. We slept and fed at Chinese inns, and very comfortable they were on the whole. The journey was uneventful, and its general features are familiar to all travellers in China, or readers of books on Chinese travel.

The only incident on the road was the meeting with a party of Tibetans *en route* for Peking. We came across them on a lonely bit of road one day—their leader in a closed litter, the servants, etc., riding. I stopped and spoke to the latter, asking who they were, and as we were talking the big man's chair came up. When he heard me talking to his servants he leapt out of his chair—a great stout Lhasa monk—and came running up to me beaming and calling out: "He's talking Tibetan, he's talking Tibetan!"

They were a party carrying letters, etc., to the Dalai Lama from Lhasa, and they were overjoyed to meet someone in a strange land talking their own language. The Kumar then rode up, and we had a long chat, and heard and gave each other all the latest news, and our stout friend continued his journey.

We spent a couple of days at Wu-Tai-Shan, a famous place of pilgrimage for Buddhists, in charge of a Tibetan prelate, who received us hospitably and looked after us well, and the Kumar performed all the usual ceremonies and attended and conducted numerous religious services.

We returned by the same route to Pao-Ting-Fu, and travelled thence by rail to Hankow on the Yangtse, where Mr. Fraser, the Consul-General, received us very kindly and put us up. Then by boat down the Yangtse to Nan-King, and so by rail to Shanghai. Here we took ship

and proceeded to Burma, touching at Hong-Kong and Singapore. Our time was too short to go up to Mandalay, and after a couple of days at Rangoon we crossed to Calcutta.

This ended a very pleasant, and in many ways a very instructive, trip. We had both learnt a good deal about the Far East, a subject of peculiar interest to anyone concerned with Tibetan affairs, and the Kumar had fulfilled several of his pet ambitions by visiting Peking and Wu-Tai-Shan and seeing the Dalai Lama. I said good-bye to him with regret. He was a simple-minded and earnest youth, and full of good intentions as regards his little country. We never met again, and to the deep regret of all who knew him he died in Sikkim a few years later.

This severed my last connection with Tibet and the Tibetan frontier—at least for many years. An entirely new sphere of action now awaited me.

## CHAPTER VII

### REVOLUTIONARY PERSIA

(1909)

By the wave of a magic wand (in the prosaic form of an order from the Government of India) I was now transferred bodily from Tibet—with its cheery happy-go-lucky Mongoloid people, its Lamas, its temples, and its weird part-Chinese, part-Indian, and part-indigenous civilisation, all situated on the huge trans-Himalayan plateau at an average altitude of somewhere about 15,000 ft. above the sea—and dropped down in Persia, a country totally new and strange to me, and differing I suppose as much as is practically possible from Tibet in every single respect—race, type, character, social manners and customs, language, religion, etc., etc ; the only point of resemblance consisting in some of the physical characteristics of the Tibetan and Persian plateaus.

I was appointed British Consul of Seistan and Kain, two provinces in the south-east of Persia adjoining the tri-junction of Afghanistan, Persia, and Baluchistan; but as the then incumbent, Major R. L. Kennion, did not vacate the post till September, I was sent temporarily on special duty to Baluchistan to work at Quetta under the Agent to the Governor-General, Colonel (now Sir Henry) McMahon, an expert on all this part of the Indian frontier.

The first thing to do, obviously, was to learn the language. I had already, during my previous sojourn on

the N.W. frontier, acquired an elementary knowledge of Persian, but it was mostly learnt from Indian teachers, and it is remarkable how difficult it appears to be for any native of India ever to learn to speak really good colloquial Persian. The very fact that so many Persian words are used in the *lingua franca* of India (that bastard patois "Urdu") seems to present an obstacle rather than an aid, as the Indian pronunciation differs greatly from the Persian, and in many cases the actual meaning of a word is changed.<sup>1</sup> So I followed my old practice in learning languages of engaging a native of the country who could talk only his own tongue, and putting up with all the trouble and inconvenience thereby involved in order to attain my object. I found it extremely difficult to lay my hands on a suitable man anywhere in India, but I finally succeeded in picking up a rather disreputable old gentleman who had formerly been a sort of hanger-on of the Zil-es-Sultan (brother of Muzaffar-ed-Din Shah, and for many years Governor-General at Isfahan), who had fled the country for some offence or other, and was trying to earn a livelihood in India.

It would have been difficult to find anyone more unsatisfactory and inefficient as a servant, but there was no doubt about his ability to speak his own language (although with a strong Isfahani accent—but that did not matter), and he would hold forth by the hour regarding the glories and wonders of Persia—its climate, horses, laws, customs, kings, peoples, etc., etc. Like most Persians, he was imbued with an immense and limitless conceit, both of himself and of everything Persian. Nothing that he had seen in his travels in India had impressed him in the slightest degree or shaken for one instant his belief in, and admiration for, his own land

<sup>1</sup> A typical instance of this is the word "Takhlif," a Persian word which properly means "duty," but which has been transmogrified in "Urdu" into "trouble" or "difficulty."

and all its ways, manners, and customs. He regarded railway trains, motor-cars, steamers, electric light, our soldiers, houses, horses, and everything else with a sublime contempt which he was unable to refrain from expressing on every possible opportunity, and he would draw most odious comparisons between all this and the glories which he had left behind him at home.

I only mention this as illustrating the attitude of an ordinary ignorant Persian towards foreign countries and institutions. A well-bred and well-educated Persian would not, of course, openly express such ultra-national views, and indeed many representatives of the upper classes have a very hearty appreciation of the *agréments* of European, and especially of French, civilisation. But at heart, I think, they are all much the same—intensely national and patriotic after a style of their own, and with a secret scorn for foreigners and foreign ways.

After a month or two at Quetta, and having learnt all I could from Sir Henry McMahon and the papers in his office, I decided, with the consent of the Government of India, to proceed to Seistan by the long roundabout route *viâ* Egypt, Constantinople, the Black Sea, Tiflis, the Caspian, Tehran, and Meshad, which would give me the opportunity of meeting the British Minister at Tehran, and of learning something about Persia and Persian politics at first hand, instead of merely trekking across the 500 miles of the Nushki desert to my destination.

It was an interesting moment in the history of the Near and Middle East, and the journey promised to be eventful. The new constitutional movement was now in full blast in Turkey and Persia. During the previous year, 1908, the "Young Turk" party had suddenly asserted themselves, and had faced and overthrown the tyranny of Abdul Hamid. It had been an extraordinary *bouleversement*—not merely of an individual tyrant, but of the system of government which had prevailed in the

East for immemorial ages. This is not the place to relate the history of the "Young Turk" movement. It did not, except incidentally, affect my personal experiences. But as my fate brought me to Constantinople towards the end of May 1909, I was able to see and hear at first hand something of what it all meant. I travelled from Quetta to Bombay, and by P. & O. to Egypt, and so across to Constantinople, touching at Athens *en route*. By the time I landed at Constantinople the second phase of the revolution had just finished, and Sultan Abdul Hamid had been deported to Salonika, the first Turkish parliament was in session, and (perhaps as significant a portent as any) the dogs of Constantinople had been deported too!

So it was a very different city that I came to from the Constantinople which I had read of so often in so many books ancient and modern. First and foremost in one's experiences (it is melancholy to recall it now) was the friendliness, and indeed the enthusiasm for Great Britain, and even for individual Englishmen. One was greeted with friendly smiles wherever one went. I called at the Embassy (the Ambassador, Sir Gerald Lowther, as it happened was in England at the moment), and was taken in hand by Mr. Fitzmaurice, the Dragoman of the Embassy, who most kindly arranged a little programme for me during my three or four days' stay at the capital. I attended a session of the brand-new Assembly, visited the camps of the Turkish troops on the heights above the city, and was shown the scenes of the recent fighting round about the barracks in the town; and most interesting of all, I met several of the Young Turk leaders, including Enver Pasha, at dinner with Mr. Fitzmaurice at our hotel. From them we heard at first hand many of the details of the revolution, and of the long and elaborate organisation which had led up to it and secured its success. All one's sympathies went out to these cour-



ageous, vigorous, and, as it seemed then, sincere patriots, who had run such risks and fought so brave and successful a fight against an iniquitous administration. No one doubted that many difficulties and dangers had still to be met before Turkey could establish a really democratic form of Government on a firm basis, but at least a beginning had been made, and the tyranny of the old autocracy had been overthrown.

But even then, even at this very early stage of the new régime, there were disquieting symptoms. News kept coming in from Asia Minor regarding the massacres of the Armenians in various places, and great numbers of these unfortunates came crowding into the city to take refuge there under the ægis of their own Patriarch. I visited the Patriarch, and had a long conversation with him regarding the lot of his unfortunate nationals, and I gathered from him that the attitude of the new régime was not much more sympathetic in this matter than that of the Sultan's Government; and in the Assembly, after the first flash of enthusiasm had worn off, sectional jealousies and rivalries immediately became acute.

However, my passage through Constantinople was only an interlude, and after a brief but most instructive visit I took ship to Batoum. Having plenty of time to spare before taking over charge of my Consulate, I broke the journey across Transcaucasia at Tiflis. From here I made a diversion, and went south by rail to the Persian frontier station of Julfa, which was at that time the rail-head (the railway has since been extended to Tabriz). Here I crossed the frontier and made my first acquaintance with Persia and the Persians, which was to continue for the next seven years, and to lead me into such strange adventures. The Belgian Customs Officer received me kindly, and helped me in my arrangements for the eighty-mile drive to Tabriz, which was my objective. I arrived there on the following day after a halt *en route*, and was

hospitably received by the British Consul-General, Mr. Wratislaw. I stayed with him two or three days, making the acquaintance of Mr. W. A. Smart, also of the Consular service, whom I was to succeed some three years later as Consul of Shiraz. And I also met Taki Zadah, the well-known "Young Persian" leader, from whom I learnt many interesting details of the inner history of the Persian nationalist movement.

Tabriz was still recovering from the effects of its prolonged siege by the Royalist forces during the preceding winter—a phase of the revolutionary movement which does not enter directly into my story, but which is of great interest as illustrating Persian methods. It is most amusingly described by Mr. David Fraser in his "Turkey and Persia in Revolt." All was quiet in the city at the time of my visit, but the surrounding country was still very disturbed and infested with brigands.

I had intended to go on from Tabriz to Tehran across-country *viâ* Zenjan and Kasvin, but Mr. Wratislaw said that the country was too disturbed, and strongly advised me not to attempt it, so I rather reluctantly returned the same way I had come to Tiflis, and so on to Baku, and across the Caspian to the Persian port of Enzeli.

And at this point, in order to give the ensuing narrative its proper setting, it will be as well to present a brief purview of the general situation prevailing in Persia at that moment, and of the events which had led up to it.

For a good many years past Persia had been suffering under gross maladministration. Muzaffar-ed-Din Shah, who had succeeded his father, Nasar-ed-Din Shah, in 1896, was a weak and inefficient ruler, intent chiefly on raising money by forced loans to be spent on his own extravagant journeys to Europe and other follies. The country resented this foreign indebtedness and the various evils which sprang from it, and an agitation for a better government was set on foot, which grew gradually in

strength as time went on. It is unnecessary here to deal with this agitation or the principal persons who manipulated it. Various excellent books on Persia deal with this period in detail. It is sufficient to say that just before his death at the end of 1906 Muzaffar-ed-Din had been forced into granting a constitution, and his son Muhammad Ali Shah stepped into this *damnosa hereditas*, together with the other obligations and responsibilities of his kingdom.

Muhammad Ali was of a far worse type than even his inefficient and extravagant father. He was of a sulky, surly disposition, heavy and lowering, without a spark of intelligence or culture—a real Oriental despot—false, cowardly, and cruel. It was not to be expected that a man of this type would suffer patiently any kind of constitutional government, and before he had been very long on the throne he showed his hand. He made one or two half-hearted efforts to destroy the Assembly during the year 1907, but his courage failed him on each occasion at the last minute, and more than once he swore the most solemn oaths on the Koran to be faithful to the constitution.

But it was all pretence, and in June 1908 (just a year before the period of this narrative) he collected some of his troops outside the city, and, supported by the Cossack Brigade under the Russian Colonel Liakhoff, surrounded and bombarded the Baharistan, the Parliament buildings, where the deputies were in session. The deputies fled—some escaped, some were captured, and of these two were strangled and others put in chains. But the country reacted under the blow with unexpected vigour. A revolt broke out at Tabriz, which lasted throughout the winter and the following spring, and which helped to keep the flame of nationalism alight; and two different centres became foci of revolution, namely, Isfahan and Resht. At Isfahan the Bakhtiari, under

Sam-sam-es-Saltaneh and Sirdar-i-Asad, declared for the Constitution, and began hostile preparations; whilst at Resht a heterogeneous force, consisting chiefly of Caucasian adventurers and Armenians, assembled under the nominal leadership of a wealthy Persian notable known as Sipahdar-i-Azam, but really guided by an Armenian adventurer, named Ephraim, a determined and courageous man. These two forces, then, actuated by totally different motives and composed of totally different elements, began their march on the capital towards the end of June, working quite independently but in communication with each other. It was my fate to land at Enzeli early in July, just as the two forces were converging on Tehran.

I learnt all I could of the situation from the British Vice-Consul at Resht (Mr. Rabino), and pushed off next morning in one of those dreadful old phaetons in which the unfortunate traveller has to make so many journeys in Persia, and I arrived on the following morning at Kasvin, some eighty miles from Tehran. I had seen nothing of the Resht force on the road hitherto, but Kasvin was all agog with excitement, and I was told that Sipahdar and Ephraim had left the day before, and were advancing on the capital with their respective forces, which were variously estimated at anything from 10,000 downwards. I drove along during the next night passing bands of armed men (nearly all horsemen) on the way, and a most picturesque and warlike collection of ruffians they were—mostly hard-looking, bearded men of the Caucasian type, and all armed to the teeth and positively bristling with lethal weapons ("walking arsenals," as Mr. David Fraser calls them in his admirable book dealing with this period, "Turkey and Persia in Revolt"). I was occasionally held up and questioned by these gentry, but the mere statement that I was a British Consul was always sufficient to secure me a free passage immediately;

and over and over again these irregular warriors shouted as I drove along, "Hurrah for the 'Mashruteh' (i.e. 'the Constitution') and the Inglis." We were popular in Persia in those days.

About noon the next day I arrived at Karij, some thirty miles from Tehran, and was told that the Sipahdar was resting there. On hearing that a British Consul was passing through, he sent an invitation to me to come and see him. I went to the rest-house which he was occupying, and we had a conversation lasting about twenty minutes. The Sipahdar was at this time a middle-aged man, with good features, and pleasant, courteous manners (like all the better-class Persians, and in fact like practically all Persians of every class), but weak and uncertain in manner and expression, and anything but one's beau-ideal of a revolutionary leader.

I found him in a state of great agitation and doubt. He had just received the news of the landing of a Russian force at Enzeli, and was admittedly between the devil and the deep sea. He was irrevocably committed to his revolutionary friends by his advance to within striking distance of the capital, and the prospects in this direction were far from bright. In front of him lay a walled city, defended by a Russian-trained force under Colonel Liakhoff and the regular soldiers of the Shah. His own force was small, undisciplined, with no artillery, and he was still in very considerable doubt as to the ultimate attitude of the Bakhtiari force which was now close to him, and whether he could count on them for co-operation; and as if all this was not bad enough he now heard that he had a considerable force of Russians behind him, who, whatever they might do, would certainly be reactionary in their views and would support the Shah against the Nationalists.

It was a nasty situation altogether, and his agitation was pardonable in the circumstances. He made me a

hasty, rather incoherent speech, asking me to convey a message from him to the British Minister to say that he was acting for what he believed to be the best in the interests of Persia; that he had no desire for bloodshed, but that he would have to use force if opposed; and that whatever happened he would take the strictest precautions to safeguard the lives and property of foreigners.

His idea no doubt in entrusting me with this message was to try and secure the good graces of the British Minister, which might be useful to him in the event of his adventure failing, and of his having to seek refuge somewhere.

I promised to convey his message to the Minister, and I then pushed on to Tehran.

I found the capital, as might have been expected, in a state of suppressed excitement. All sorts of rumours were floating about, and no one knew what was going to happen next. I spent the night at the Headquarters of the Imperial Bank of Persia, a magnificent building in the great Gun Square in the centre of Tehran, where I was entertained by the Manager, Mr. A. O. Wood (now alas! no more), and the accountant, Mr. Sydney Rogers, and where I made the acquaintance of "The Times" correspondent, Mr. David Fraser. I drove up early next morning to Gulahek, the summer quarters of the British Legation, a few miles north of Tehran, and conveyed the Sipahdar's message to the British Minister, Sir George Barclay. There was nothing more that either he or any other member of the Diplomatic Corps could do for the moment. Muhammad Ali Shah had brought his fate upon his own head, and forces were in action which had to work themselves out to the bitter end. At Sir George's invitation, I transferred my quarters to the Legation at Gulahek, from which very comfortable centre I was able to watch the culmination of the drama.

The general situation was roughly as follows: the city was supposed to be securely held both by the Russian-led Cossack brigade and by the Shah's troops, and owing to its encircling wall and fortified gates it was regarded as impregnable against anything but heavy artillery. The Shah himself was in his summer palace of Beharistan, a few miles outside the city, protected by a strong body-guard of regular (save the mark!) and irregular troops. The revolutionary forces were, as already described, advancing towards the capital from the south and west, and their combined forces were calculated to amount to less than 3,000 men altogether, and the only artillery they possessed consisted of a few smooth-bore cannon of small calibre with the Bakhtiari. Whilst behind them, advancing from the Caspian, was a force of some 3,000 Russians, whose support would certainly be given to the Shah. From the military point of view the Nationalists' chances of success certainly did not appear to be very bright.

Events now began to move rapidly. On the 11th and 12th of July there was skirmishing between the Royalists and the revolutionary forces in the neighbourhood of Karij which led to no decisive result, although the two columns (the Bakhtiari under Sirdar-i-Asad and the Resht force under Sipahdar) were said to have joined hands. But on the early morning of the 13th we were greeted with the amazing news that the Nationalist force had entered Tehran during the night unopposed, that the greater part of the city was in their possession, and that desultory fighting between them and the Cossacks was proceeding. This was a nasty blow for the King of Kings, and his entourage of sycophants, favourites, and notorious blackguards. Some hasty, but quite abortive, counteraction was attempted. A battery was brought into action on a hill (the Kasr-i-Kajar) overlooking the city, and some shells were fired at the

quarter occupied by the revolutionaries, and a very half-hearted attack was attempted against one of the city gates.

The official rôle of the foreign communities was, of course, one of strict neutrality, whatever their private sentiments might be. It was no affair of theirs who won. All they were concerned with was the safety of their own nationals. Our Minister, as soon as he heard of what had happened, had sent his Military Attaché, Captain C. B. Stokes, to take charge of the Legation buildings in the city, to see that no damage was done to them, and that they were not made use of as a place of refuge or for any unneutral purpose by partisans of either side. Captain Stokes, however, was too prominently identified with the Nationalist Party to be able to maintain an entirely neutral atmosphere at the Legation, and certain of the other foreign Ministers protested to Sir George against his presence there; and Sir George, accordingly, asked me to go and take his place, requesting Captain Stokes to return to Gulahek, as the Minister required a man of his knowledge and experience of Persia to be with him during this crisis.

I therefore drove down to the city. The gateway was guarded by revolutionary soldiers, who challenged me as I drove up, but let me through without further parley on hearing that I came from the British Legation. The Legation in the city consists of a group of buildings, situated in a large walled enclosure, partly garden, partly "compound." Here I found Captain Stokes, and took over charge from him. The general atmosphere was disturbed enough. There was a good deal of intermittent fighting going on between the revolutionaries and the Cossacks, and bullets were whizzing through the tree-tops of the Legation gardens at intervals all day and all night, varied by an occasional shell burst. All the surrounding buildings were occupied by the regulars, who



maintained a desultory fire, apparently at anything which they could see moving; and if there was nothing moving, then at nothing at all.

I had not quite realised the haphazard nature of Persian military tactics at that time, but the next morning I went to the main Legation gateway opening on to the street to have a look round. I rashly stepped just outside the gateway when I heard the whizz of a bullet past me, and looking round saw that the poor old head outrider (the "Mir Ghulam," as he is called in Persian) of the Legation, who was standing beside me, had been hit in the thigh. It was a nasty wound, but under the care of the Telegraph Department Surgeon, Dr. Scott, he soon recovered. But it was a warning, and we all kept under cover as long as the fighting lasted.

That same afternoon a messenger informed me that the Irregular leader, the Armenian Yephrem (or Ephraim) wished to see me, and presently he was ushered in with two of his staff. He was a striking figure. A man of about forty to forty-five years of age, of middle height, strongly built, bearded, with a resolute face and determined glance and manner. He had the appearance and bearing of a born leader. He was armed to the teeth—besides his rifle slung over his shoulder, he had two magazine pistols and a dagger in his belt, and his waist-belt and shoulder-belts were full of cartridges stuck into small leather partitions. We shook hands, and he sat down and explained to me quietly and courteously what he had come about. Some of the buildings of the Indo-European Telegraph Co., he said, were being used by the Cossacks as defensive posts, and whilst he was reluctant in any way to interfere with foreign property, unless the Cossacks could be induced to vacate these buildings, he would be compelled to attack them. He hoped that I might be able so to arrange matters that this would not be necessary.

I said I would represent the matter to the British Minister, and he departed. It was clear that here we had the real leader of the movement, and not in the vacillating ineffective Sipahdar. In fact, it is very significant how little part any real Persian took in this, which was the decisive crisis of the Constitutional movement. The Persian leaders, it is true, did a vast amount of talking and writing to prepare for a Constitution, but the action which decided the question once for all was inspired and led entirely by outsiders—either Bakhtiaris on the one hand, or Armenian and Caucasian adventurers on the other.

This rather farcical situation (most Persian military operations were farcical in those days) continued for three days—neither party distinguishing itself by its enterprise or valour; and the end came on the 16th July when the wretched Shah, losing heart and courage, and no doubt driven by a guilty conscience, threw up the sponge and his kingdom at the same time, and fled for refuge to the Russian Legation. The news spread like wildfire, and great scenes of rejoicing were witnessed. Thus ended, once for all, the régime of the Kajar despotism. Resistance collapsed immediately, all fighting ceased, and Colonel Liakhoff, with his Cossacks, surrendered under a safe conduct.

A day or two later I accompanied Mr. George Churchill, the Oriental Secretary of the Legation, on a formal visit to the revolutionary leaders to convey to them the congratulations of the British Minister. We drove down to the city together with a small escort of Indian cavalry, and passed in through the Yusufabad Gate, and so to the Baharistan Palace—the Parliament House—where the leaders of the Nationalist Party were awaiting us. The streets and the square in front of the Baharistan were choked with delighted crowds, who, when they recognised us as British officials, cheered enthusiastically for "Great Britain and the Constitution."

Here, as in Turkey, the two words were linked together—England and Freedom, England and the Constitution. We were received by the Sipahdar, Sirdar-i-Asad, the Bakhtiari leader (Ephraim did not appear), and Mr. Churchill conveyed to them the message of His Excellency the British Minister, and after a short formal conversation, we returned to the Legation through the same cheering crowds.

The Revolution was, in fact, a *fait accompli*, and it only remained to pick up the pieces and to set the new administration on its legs. This did not take long. A Cabinet was hastily formed, which assumed the reins of office, appointed new blood to posts in the Central and Provincial Administrations, and dealt out a pretty summary justice to some of the worst malefactors of the old régime (I saw several of them hanging in the Gun Square during the course of the next few days); but on the whole there were no very general reprisals and comparatively few executions. Arrangements were made for Muhammad Ali Shah's departure to Europe with a suitable pension, etc., and the poor little Heir Apparent, Sultan Ahmed Shah, was duly installed in his place. I was present at the young Shah's first formal reception of the *corps diplomatique* a few days later, and was touched by the pathetic little figure—even then, in his twelfth year, inclined to corpulence and not very graceful—with his huge sword, nearly as big as himself, and priceless jewels; and one felt instinctively that a reign begun under such unfavourable auspices was not likely to prove very successful or happy.

This was my introduction to Persia, and it was not a bad one. It gave me a pretty good general idea of the politics and leading personalities of the capital—better than I could have got by years of service in any provincial post—and I felt that I had shared, in however minor a capacity, in historic events.

But it was now time for me to leave the capital, and to make my way to Meshad, where I was to meet Major Kennion, and take over charge from him of the Seistan Consulate. It was a long trek, some 600 miles, and I proposed to travel with my little caravan, taking twenty-four or twenty-five days, that is an average twenty-four to twenty-five miles a day. I had engaged some Persian servants at Tehran (and excellent fellows they were), and I had bought a couple of horses, and arranged for a small caravan of mules, and we set out on our march towards the end of July.

Persian travelling is tedious enough, and it has been described so often that there is not much to be said about it. It was very hot at this time of year, and we soon found that the best arrangement was to march by night. The little caravan used to start off about eight o'clock in the evening, the servants riding on mules, and I would sleep on the roof of the caravanserai till two or three o'clock in the morning. My "Syce" would then awake me, and after a cup of tea (a universal beverage in Persia) he and I would start off and ride rapidly through to the next stage in the cool hours of the early morning.

Horse-flesh is cheap in Persia, and I had succeeded in finding two excellent horses at a very reasonable price. One, a big upstanding bay, I called Sipahdar after the revolutionary leader; and the other, a rather troublesome brown, was christened "Ali Gapi," in honour of the brigand who was at that time terrorising the road to Meshad. On reaching our destination we would find our caravan arrived, baggage opened up, and breakfast ready, sometimes in a private room of the caravanserai, sometimes in a private house, where my Persian entourage ensured me a ready welcome. The rest of the day was spent reading (I had a plentiful supply of books), and sleeping, and chatting with local notables. It was a

monotonous business, but was all valuable experience to me, as I was learning all the time something about Persian ways and character.

This Tehran-Meshad road has from time immemorial been subject to raids from the Turkomans who live away to the north just across the Persian border in Russian Transcaspia, and who used to sweep down periodically and loot and carry off men, women, and children as slaves and hostages. Every reader of "Hajji Baba" will recollect the immortal Hajji's dreadful experience on this road, and how he and his master were actually carried off as slaves by the Turkomans. The intervening country was then (and as far as I know is still) a no-man's land with wide areas of uninhabited forest-clad hill country. I was to visit this region—a sportsman's paradise—the following year, and shall reserve a description of it to a later chapter.

Our journey was uneventful, except for the meeting with the local brigand, Ali Gapi. This gentleman was notorious at that time all over this part of the country, and he roamed at large with his band, robbing where he pleased, and holding up caravans. We met on the road one morning at daybreak as I was riding alone, and stopped and passed the time of day. He was accompanied by about half a dozen ruffians, but was civil enough to me, and was greatly amused and flattered when I told him that my horse was named after him, and we parted amicably after a short conversation. He had no desire, I imagine, to bring about undesirable complications by robbing a foreign Consul. Persia was full of these brigands then, and for a good many years afterwards. Some of them were virtually independent knights of the road, and lived at ease with their bands of followers in complete defiance of the Persian Government, roaming far and wide, and at times holding up large towns and villages and extorting ransoms from Governors

and other officials. I had plenty of experience of them later on in Eastern Persia, and afterwards in Fars.

I got pretty weary of this kind of travel by the time I reached Nishapur, some 450 miles from Tehran, so I hired a carriage and drove in the last few stages to Meshad, where I was hospitably received by Lieut.-Colonel Percy Sykes,<sup>1</sup> our Consul-General, and where I took over charge of the Seistan Consulate from Major Kennion, who had come up from Seistan to meet me here, *en route* for Europe *viâ* Transcaspia. He, however, first went off on a shooting trip to the country mentioned above lying N.W. of Meshad beyond Bujnurd.

I now found myself in charge of all the complicated paraphernalia and personnel of a Consul of the Indian Service in Persia—a very different affair from a Foreign Office Consulate. The Indian Government, realising the paramount importance of the personal touch in dealing with Orientals, has always framed its establishments with the view to giving a good deal of freedom of movement to its representatives, both in India itself and across the frontiers. In a country like Persia such movement necessitates a fairly large staff, partly as actual protection against brigands or unfriendly tribesmen (which was no illusory danger, as I shall have ample opportunity of proving during the course of my Persian reminiscences), and partly for the ordinary duties of pitching tents, loading mules, etc., etc. The Seistan Consulate was particularly well-equipped in these respects, and if I remember right, the personnel consisted of no less than 137 persons—which included a British Medical Officer with an adequate staff, two Vice-Consuls, an escort of about eighty Indian Cavalry, a score or so of local levies (or catch-'em-alive-ohs, as they were disrespectfully termed), and various minor retainers—a lordly establishment. However, it was just at this time that the attention of

<sup>1</sup> Now Brig.-General Sir Percy Sykes, K.C.I.E., C.B., C.M.G.

the Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley, had been directed to this lavish way of doing things as contrasted with the rather exiguous establishments of the Foreign Office Consulates, and almost the first official communication which I received after taking over charge was a telegram instructing me to cut down the expenses of the Consulate by fifty per cent. forthwith. It is always easier to increase than to reduce establishments (witness the war-time establishments at home and abroad), but it had to be done, and I was able before long to effect a very substantial reduction without loss of efficiency.

After a few days at Meshad I set forth again, this time due south, with my now imposing cortège. The weather was now much cooler, and we marched comfortably by day and camped at night in our own tents—a much pleasanter method of travelling than having to inhabit ramshackle Persian caravanserais. Passing through Turbat-i-Haidari we reached the borders of the Province of Kain, which was part of my Consular district.

This charge comprises the two districts of Seistan and the Kainat. A glance at the map will show how they lie on the extreme eastern side of Persia bordering on Afghanistan—the Kainat to the north, Seistan to the south—the two extending some 300 miles from north to south. The Kainat (capital Birjand, not the town of Kain) is a district very similar in its physical characteristics to the bulk of the great Persian plateau—that is to say, it is a vast desiccated, undulating plain, practically desert but sparsely covered with scrub bushes and coarse grass, and with barren mountain-ranges everywhere bounding the horizon and occasionally crossing one's line of march; and at every twenty miles or so a small village watered by an elaborate artificial system of irrigation, and showing a few wretched huts and some green fields during the spring and summer amidst the surrounding

wilderness. The vast bulk of Persia is, in fact, to all intents and purposes, a huge desert, diversified here and there at long intervals by tiny dots of cultivation. There are, it is true, larger oases to be found—round Isfahan, for example, and especially round Shiraz—where there are extensive cultivated plains. But by far the greater part of the country is as described above, and in the centre there lies the great sandy waste—the Dasht-i-Kavir—uninhabited and uninhabitable.

It is all the more surprising, therefore, after traversing as I had done over 1,000 miles of this barren and almost waterless country, devoid even of a stream except those artificial water-channels alluded to above, to arrive suddenly on the banks of a large fresh-water lake, almost an inland sea, and to find oneself in Seistan almost surrounded by water—partly by the great river Helmund and partly by the lake. The map illustrates this very curious natural phenomenon, and brings out the unique character of the Seistan oasis. It will be observed that from the estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates to that of the Indus (a distance, measured in a straight line, of nearly 1,300 miles) no great river reaches the sea. The whole of the intervening country (which includes Persia) is devoid of running water but for the insignificant irrigation channels, and the few inland streams (such as the so-called “Band-i-Amir” river, near Shiraz) which exhaust themselves after a few miles in the sands of the desert. The only real river which exists between the Tigris and the Indus is the Helmund, which drains all the highlands of northern and eastern Afghanistan. This river, running south through Kandahar, turns west and then north, and suddenly spreads out into a great sheet of fresh water, known as the “Hamun,” which in turn almost surrounds the oasis of Seistan.

The Hamun varies a good deal in extent during the different seasons of the year, and also from year to year.



During the summer months the volume of the Helmund river is increased by the rains and by the melting of the snows in the Afghan hills, and the lake swells to the dimensions shown on the map. Periodically, every ten years or so, it overflows by a channel generally dry, into a depression which lies in Afghan territory to the south-east of Seistan, and at such times Seistan is actually surrounded by water except for a narrow isthmus between the Helmund and the depression in question. In the autumn the Hamun begins to dry up, and by spring has been reduced to perhaps half its summer area, leaving a passage of dry land (or rather damp mud) across its bed for travellers coming from the west.

During the winter this great lake is the abode of myriads of water-fowl of all descriptions. I shall have something to say on this aspect of Seistan in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TWO AND A HALF YEARS IN EASTERN PERSIA

(1909-1912)

IN the last chapter I have rather anticipated matters by rushing into a description of Seistan before I had arrived there. However, it will serve to give a general idea of the geography of the region where I now found myself. My first halt on my journey south was at Birjand, the capital of the Province of Kain. I was met a few stages out by Mr. W. R. Howson, of the Indian Telegraph Department, who was stationed at Birjand, and combined the duties of Vice-Consul with his regular work as an official of the Telegraph Department; and he accompanied me on my march, and put me *au fait* with all the local politics.

This was my first meeting with a man who was to remain my colleague for the next two and a half years, and my friend until his untimely death in 1918 as a result of influenza, which proved too much for a constitution undermined by strain and overwork during the war. He was a remarkable man, who by sheer force of personality and integrity of character had built up for himself a position of great influence in this part of Persia. He possessed a natural gift for at once making friends with, and securing the respect of, the Persians. He was courteous and friendly with them in all his social relations, whilst at the same time making it clear that he stood for rigid principles in all matters of business or politics.

(Curiously enough the Persian, even if himself somewhat lax at times as regards matters of principle, respects such scrupulosity in others, and indeed seems to expect it—in an Englishman at any rate.) Later on he was entrusted with the management of the Birjand branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia, and although without any previous training or experience of banking, he carried on this work successfully in addition to his other duties, and received the thanks of the Directors before he left.

For my first arrival at Birjand as British Consul an official reception (known as an *istagbal*) had been prepared—a fearsome ceremony. A couple of miles from the town a tent had been pitched, and a deputation of the leading people, official and unofficial, headed by the Governor's representative, was assembled to greet me. After the exchange of compliments, and after partaking of tea and light refreshments in the tent, the cortège wended its way to the town mounted on every variety of beast—squealing piebald stallions, Arab horses and ponies, mules, and even donkeys. This motley assembly accompanied me up to Mr. Howson's abode, where, after more tea and final compliments, we were left in peace.

I spent a few weeks at Birjand making myself acquainted with the local politics and personalities. The Governor, the Shaukat-ul-Mulk, was a young man, somewhere about thirty at this time, belonging to an old local family which had governed the two eastern provinces for several generations. He was a very agreeable specimen of a Persian gentleman of good family—intelligent, good-looking, with the exquisite manners and courtesy of a well-bred Persian, a good governor (so far as such a thing was then possible in Persia), and he had always been on friendly terms with the British. Our relations, both official and private, were most cordial, and they remained so during the whole of the time I was on this frontier.

For the rest, Birjand presented no attraction. The

town consists of a collection of mud-roofed dwellings, huddled together on a bare wind-swept plateau, bitterly cold in winter and an oven in summer. There is practically no vegetation of any sort or kind, and the meagre crops owe their existence to the artificial underground water-channels which are such a feature in Persia, as do also the few "gardens" scattered here and there in the vicinity of the town. There is very little sport—a few sand-grouse to be shot near the water-holes and channels, and Persian gazelle (*Ahu*) to be stalked or driven on the endless barren plains—a tedious form of sport. In fact, the desolate nature of the eastern Persian towns has to be seen to be properly realised. They are really small oases reclaimed from the vast encircling desert, and present but few amenities of any kind.

However, we were now well into the "cold weather," and it seemed time to move on down to Seistan, which, from all the accounts I had heard of it, was a perfect inferno during the summer of heat, insects, and an insufferable hot wind (the *Bád-i-sad-o-bist ruz*, that is, "the wind of the one hundred and twenty days" as the Persians call it), which blows practically without intermission for some four months on end. But by November all these afflictions were over, so I marched off with my caravan, and a few days later had my first view of the Hamun. It had already shrunk to much less than its summer dimensions, and I was able to make my way dry shod over the caked mud of its bed. Here I was met by the Medical Officer and Vice-Consul, Captain J. B. D. Hunter, I.M.S., who had been stationed at Seistan for a couple of years, and was pretty well acclimatised to it. We rode on together to the Consulate, passing the capital of the Province (officially termed Nasirabad, but commonly called the "Shahr"—city—or "Shahr-i-Seistan") and having survived the inevitable *istagbal*, settled down for our winter sojourn.

And a very pleasant sojourn it proved to be. The weather from November to March is delightful—no rain, bright sunny days, and cool nights; and the small game shooting—wild-fowl and black partridges—is perhaps the best of its kind in the world. The European community, besides myself and Captain Hunter and a telegraphist of the Indian Telegraph Department, consisted of the Russian Consul and his wife and their Military Attaché, and the Belgian Customs Officer.

The Russian Consul, Baron Cherkassoff, proved to be a very pleasant colleague. The 1907 Anglo-Russian Convention, by dividing Persia into British and Russian “spheres of influence,” had cut at the root of the old-time rivalry between the representatives of the two countries. We knew where we were, and that we were not expected to intrigue and make mischief in each other’s spheres. Frankness and bonhomie were the order of the day; and whenever one heard of one’s *cher collègue* attempting to carry on any little underground plot of his own, one immediately proceeded to tackle him with the most effusive friendliness, and to drag his proceedings into the light of day. He, of course, welcomed this exhibition of cordial friendship, and the little game generally came to a premature end there and then. But if not, a word to the Minister at Tehran set bigger forces to work, which soon produced the required result. But, in fact, my new colleague was a very amiable man, and we got on very well together. The charming lady who kept house for him was a delightful hostess, and many a jolly evening we had, beginning with the usual lordly *zakooska* and vodka—a feast in itself, but a mere preliminary to the ensuing repast; and finishing up with Cossack dances and music round a bonfire in the courtyard.

The Belgian Customs Officer also was a pleasant cultured man, and an acquisition to our small society.



AUTHOR AND CONSULAR STAFF AND ESCORT SEISTAN 1910  
(Capt J B Dalzell Hunter I M S , on Author s right)



REED BOATS ON THE HAMUN  
(See page 371 )



The fly in the ointment was the Governor, the Hashmat-ul-Mulk, a cousin of our friend the Shaukat, but a very different person in every way. A heavy, boorish man, with no manners or social attributes, and (very foolishly from his point of view considering that he lived in our sphere of influence) a confirmed Anglophobe and Russophil. This attitude of his produced some complications, and led eventually to his disgrace and dismissal; but as it was not in his power seriously to damage our interests it did not matter very much, and he only needed an occasional talking to to keep him within bounds.

One of the first trips which I made was to the little desert outpost at Kuh-Malik-Siah, about 100 miles south of Seistan, which came within my Consular District, and where there was stationed a Vice-Consul, an Indian gentleman named Ashraf Khan. A glance at the map will show that Kuh-Malik-Siah stands at the tri-junction of Afghanistan, Persia, and the Indian Empire. It is a dreary and a desolate place. Travelling south from the Consulate in Seistan, one passes through some fifteen miles of cultivated country, all irrigated by canals from the dam across the Helmund river, and then one emerges into sheer unadulterated desert—part of the huge sandy waste which occupies all this part of Persia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan.

It has been my fortune, during the term of my public service, to live at some fairly desolate and solitary places, but never have I seen a more dreary and uninviting outpost than Kuh-Malik-Siah. Imagine a barren rocky range of hills running through a sandy and stony desert, and at the north end of it, where it abruptly terminates, a tiny settlement consisting of the "Vice-Consulate" (a mud-built two-roomed hut), a similar abode inhabited by an official of the Persian Customs Service, a primitive post-office, and a walled enclosure for the reception of goods and animals with some lean-to sheds and a well,



and there you have the seat of our Vice-Consul. There is no village—not a hut, not a tree, not a blade of grass (far less any cultivation)—nothing but the abominable howling desert and the bare rocky hills. The *raison d'être* for the presence here of a Vice-Consul was the fact that Kuh-Malik-Siah lies on the frontier, where the route from India across the Nushki desert enters Persian territory, and it was necessary for the Persian Government to keep a small staff here, to check imports and exports, assess customs duties, etc., and for these and other reasons of a political nature it had been decided at the time of Colonel McMahon's Mission to establish a British Vice-Consulate also. The whole arrangement, when I first heard of it at Meshad, appeared to me unnecessary, and it was one of the first reductions which I recommended should be made as a part of the new economy scheme.

I was sorry to have to part with the incumbent of this appalling post, Khan Bahadur Ashraf Khan, but for his own sake it was best that he should go. He belonged to an old Afghan family, which had done good and faithful service for the Indian Government for years, and had migrated and settled in India after the first Afghan war. Although still quite a young man (not more than thirty) his hair had turned snow-white as the result of the hardships which he had undergone in our service here and elsewhere. He had (and has) a charming personality—speaking and writing English with perfect idiom and fluency, and with delightful manners and a ready wit. We became great friends during the few months he still remained in Seistan, and I parted from him with sincere regret.

One of the problems besetting this part of the world at this period was that of the gun-running from the Persian Gulf to Afghanistan, and a very serious problem it was. Afghanistan, being a purely inland State, has

no port of her own by which she can import munitions from beyond the seas, and all such supplies have to be imported across her land frontiers. British India and the Russian Empire encircle Afghanistan on three sides, and were able to place an effective embargo on arms smuggling through their respective territories. There remained only the fourth side, the west, where Afghanistan marches with Persia, and it was here that the leakage took place. The main entrepôt for the purchase of these arms was the port of Musqat, on the Arabian coast; and the Sultan of this place being an independent potentate, we had no power to interfere with the traffic, which was conducted through the medium of foreign (chiefly French) firms. From Musqat the arms were run across to the coast of Persian Mekran in dhows, and handed over to the Afghan traders, who came down from their own country to fetch them.

The Indian Government had naturally taken such precautions as were possible to put a stop to this traffic both by the interception of the dhows by vessels of the Royal Indian Marine, and by other measures on the Persian coast; but it was impossible to prevent it altogether, and a very considerable quantity of arms got through and were carried inland in triumph by the Afghans. These people worked together in gangs, amounting often to 200 or 300 men, and they set the Persian authorities at complete defiance. They marched openly through the country with their caravans, terrorising the inhabitants, and loosing off their rifles in sheer exuberance. The Indian Government kept a small garrison at a post near the Persian frontier, some miles south of Kuh-Malik-Siah, which prevented these gentry from taking a short cut into Afghanistan through this outlying portion of Baluchistan, so they reached their own frontier across the desert between Seistan and Kuh-Malik-Siah, and as their route lay through Persian territory all the way we could

not touch them. They occasionally burnt and pillaged our little rest-houses *en passant* out of sheer light-heartedness, and more than once Ashraf Khan, when inspecting the boundary pillars of this part of the Afghan-Persian frontier, was surprised by these bands, and had to flee for his life. They would have shot him at sight without the slightest compunction.

All this lent a little "divarsity" (as they say in Ireland) to what might otherwise have been rather a humdrum and monotonous existence.

My next trip was to the Eastern Frontier of Seistan, where Persian and Afghan territory meet, and as in this little bit of frontier lies the essence of the whole political problem of Seistan, I will say a few words in explanation of the situation. As stated above, the whole of this part of Asia is one vast waterless desert, relieved only by the Helmund river, flowing from north to west and draining into the great fresh-water lake of the Hamun. From Kandahar the river runs through a typical desert, uncultivated and uninhabited, except for small hamlets here and there on its banks; but for centuries past a cultivated area, supporting a comparatively dense population, has been created round the *débouchure* of the river after it has taken its bend to the north, where a dam has been constructed a few miles before it spreads itself out into the Hamun. From this dam canals radiate on either side, east and west, and the cultivated area which thus results comprises the small but important district of Seistan—an oasis set in the midst of thousands of square miles of desert.

This rich district originally belonged to Persia, but has constantly been a bone of contention between her and Afghanistan, and has been forcibly annexed at different times by the rulers both of Herat and of Kandahar, and the local chiefs have been obliged to pay allegiance sometimes to one overlord and sometimes to another. Early

in the sixties of the last century the quarrel became so acute that the Shah of Persia requested the British Government to intervene for the protection of Persian interests; but it was not till war was actually threatened by the Amir Shirali that we consented to arbitrate, and that our offer was accepted by the two contending parties.

A Commission was accordingly appointed in 1872 under the leadership of Sir Frederick Goldsmid, who had previously delimited the frontier between British and Persian Mekran. The Commission met in Seistan, and after due investigation of the problem on the spot, Sir F. Goldsmid returned to Tehran, and there delivered his award. Roughly speaking, by this award Seistan was divided into two portions: from the dam northwards to the Hamun the Helmund constitutes the boundary—Persian Seistan lying to the west and Afghan Seistan to the east; whilst from the dam southwards a straight line to Kuh-Malik-Siah became the frontier.

This demarcation was accepted by the two parties concerned, and remained in force until some thirty years later, when the Helmund began to change its course, and the basis of the settlement became in danger. A fresh Commission was therefore necessitated, and Colonel (now Sir Henry) McMahon was appointed as its head. This Commission was an elaborate affair with a large escort, and it carried out detailed scientific researches in the Seistan area during the years 1903-5 (at the same time that the Younghusband Mission was at work in Tibet), and finally gave an award regarding the frontier differing only in points of detail from that of Sir F. Goldsmid. Boundary pillars were erected along the whole course of the frontier, from Kuh-Malik-Siah to the dam, and from the dam through the intricate and fluctuating canal area to the Hamun and for a short distance beyond.

This award and this boundary have held good ever

since, and it was one of the duties of the British Consul at Seistan to inspect the pillars periodically and to see that they were kept in a proper state of repair; and also to exchange visits once a year with the Afghan officials from the Afghan districts on the other side of the border.

So one fine day in January, Hunter and I rode across the cultivated area of Seistan—rough ground, undulating, impregnated with saltpetre in places, but fertile in the regions irrigated by the canals—through the succession of small villages consisting of dome-shaped mud hovels, and across the numerous water-channels, to find our camp already pitched for us by the banks of one of the bigger canals which here constituted the boundary. Next day we proceeded to pay visits of ceremony to the two Afghan frontier officials—one civil and one military—in their camp across the border, and the day following they returned our call in state, followed by all the inevitable rag-tag and bob-tail of an Oriental official. It was in my time a purely formal function. Sir Henry McMahon's settlement had effectually stifled all the old quarrels and heart-burnings, and had left very little opportunity for Russian intrigue—even if the 1907 Convention had not produced the almost idyllic relations which now existed between the two colleagues. So our interviews were of the most banal, but at the same time amicable, nature, and we exchanged platitudes and sipped tea by turns each in the other's tents.

All this part of Seistan (i.e. the eastern side near the Helmund and the big irrigation canals that take off from the dam) is, or was at that time, a mass of wild tamarisk bushes growing profusely wherever the soil was not actually cultivated—sometimes in thick patches, elsewhere sparsely in clumps or lines—the best cover for black partridge probably in the world. And it is this tamarisk which is used for the annual construction of the dam across the

river. It is a curious method of damming a big river—probably unique. The dam is built up entirely of bundles of tamarisk bushes, which, whilst offering sufficient resistance to raise the level of the river and so fill the irrigation canals, are porous enough to allow the rest of the water to escape through them.

All through the winter months, from November to March, we enjoyed the most excellent sport, small game shooting of the very best, which I will describe in a separate chapter; and besides this we laid out a polo ground on the sunbaked clay surface—as level as a billiard-table and nearly as hard as concrete—and we had our polo twice a week with teams made up from the mounted escort drawn from an Indian Cavalry Regiment, one or two of my Persian servants, and a very stalwart and enthusiastic ally in the person of the manager of the local branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia, Mr. Huson, a real lover of the game. It was not perhaps very high-class polo (although better than our Tibetan efforts), but it was great fun and fine exercise, and helped us to pass the time in this lonely outpost.

The end of March saw me on the road again. I had received orders to proceed to Meshad to take over charge of the Consulate-General there while Colonel Sykes was on leave in England. So I left Hunter to face the flies, the wind, the heat, and all the discomforts of a Seistan summer alone, and started off on another long 500-mile trek. It took me about a month to reach Meshad by the usual leisurely staging method, and on arrival at Meshad I found that Colonel Sykes had already left for Europe by the Transcaspian route, and Major F. McConaghey, an old friend of frontier and Gilgit days, was arriving by the same route to take charge of the Seistan Consulate during my absence.

Meshad was a far larger and gayer centre of civilisation than Seistan. Besides the medical officer (Captain

Franklin, I.M.S., who had been with us on the Lhasa expedition) and his wife, there was a Military Attaché (Captain Redl, also married), and a large foreign community, mostly Russians. This being in the Russian sphere of influence as defined by the 1907 Convention, our rôle was to play rather a back part, to keep on friendly terms with our colleagues, and to avoid studiously any action that might lead to friction or misunderstanding. The Russian Consul-General, Prince Dabijeh, was an official of the old school, a courtly old gentleman with a long grey beard and a benign aspect, and steeped to the eyebrows in every imaginable species of intrigue. But this was his affair and did not affect us, except incidentally every now and then, when the interests of some British subject were affected, and it made no difference to our social relations.

The life and social amenities in these provincial stations are much the same all over Persia. The two communities exchange periodical hospitalities—dinners and tennis parties and so on. For exercise the British community played polo and hockey, and we all played tennis more or less. A Persian summer, even on the plateau at elevations of 5,000 ft. or so, is hot and enervating. The temperature does not approach that of Indian plain stations, and the nights are always pleasant. But the heat during the day-time is trying enough nevertheless, and the elevation and the dryness of the atmosphere tell on the nerves and the constitution, and one gladly heralds the beginning of autumn—a truly delightful season all over Persia.

During my six months at Meshad I had the opportunity of observing how the administration worked under the new régime, and how a constitution seemed to suit the country and the people. An ardent young reformer was appointed as Governor-General of Khorasan, and at first, with the help of an energetic Chief of Police, he showed

signs of trying to effect reforms and correct abuses. But it was very soon apparent that the task was beyond his powers, and that the forces of corruption and reaction were too strong for him. As yet the idea of a constitutional form of government was quite foreign to the vast majority of the inhabitants of Persia, and, indeed, with the exception of a handful of foreign-educated young men, and a few of the more intelligent among the upper classes, the very word "Constitution" was unknown, and conveyed nothing to the proletariat. It was emphatically a case of pouring new wine into old bottles. Persia had been in a state of chronic disorder more or less for years, but all the time some framework of law and order existed, and some deference, even if only nominal, was paid to the Shah and to his representatives, the Governors and Governors-General in the provinces; and every now and then the Central Government made a spasmodic effort to enforce its authority and to suppress revolt or brigandage by the dispatch of a military force to some particularly lawless locality. But with the coming of the Constitution and the relegation of the Shah to the position of a mere figurehead, all the old landmarks disappeared, and the years immediately following the revolution were characterised by a growing lawlessness throughout the whole of the distracted country, and a steadily increasing tale of outrage of every description. I shall have more to say in a later chapter of these symptoms, especially as affecting Central Persia, but the effects were already beginning to be felt in the Eastern Provinces.

Whilst I was at Meshad a notorious brigand from Kashan, one Naib Hussain, finding his own neighbourhood too hot for him and having exhausted its possibilities, marched across the desert with his band, and sacked the large and flourishing town of Tabas in the Khorasan Governorship. He ignominiously ejected the Governor from his house, which he occupied himself, and he levied



heavy indemnities on the upper classes, merchants, etc.; and a little later he extended his ravages nearly to Kain. During the ensuing months, the wild, semi-independent Baluch tribes from the "Sarhad" (that is, the tribal territory lying south of Seistan) made a practice of raiding into the southern limits of the Kainat, and sacked the town of Neh and a number of smaller towns and villages, and carried off plunder and women to their tribal fastnesses. The Governor-General of Khorasan and the Governor of the Kainat did what they could to suppress these brigands and bring them to book, but, unsupported by either money or troops from the capital, they were powerless, and it was as much as they could do to maintain sufficient guard to ensure their own personal safety.

I had occasion to correspond with one of the Baluch chiefs who was supposed to be chiefly responsible for the raids from the south, and in my letter I reproached him for his lack of patriotism in not assisting and supporting the new constitutional Government. In his reply he remarked that he understood what the Shah was, but as to a *mashruteh* (Constitution), he had never seen one, and he had no intention of according respect and obedience to a phantasm which had no bodily existence. And the same sentiment prevailed pretty much all over the country.

One day during this summer at Meshad I received a reminder of my poor Tibetan friends. A telegram arrived one morning from the Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bushire to say that a party of Tibetans had unexpectedly arrived there *viâ* Bombay. They had been taken to the Residency, and when asked what they wanted, they replied that they had been sent by the Tashi Lama to try and find "the Kusho Sahib"—which was what the Tibetans always called me. The Tashi Lama had heard that I was somewhere in Persia, and he wished to commu-

nicate with me, so he had dispatched a small party of three or four trustworthy members of his staff, with letters and messages, and orders to try and find me. These good people had only the vaguest idea where Persia was, but someone told them that it could be reached *viâ* Bombay, so they proceeded there and took ship to the Persian Gulf, and duly arrived at Bushire in the sweltering heat of July, only to find that they were still over a thousand miles, or a couple of months' caravan journey, from where I was stationed. Their only funds were in the form of small bags of coarse gold-dust—current coin enough in Tibet, but rather embarrassing elsewhere. Their letters and presents were sent to me by post, and the Government of India compassionately paid their way back to their own country.

The packets arrived a few weeks later—a little bag of gold-dust worth about £5 or £6, two or three musk deer pods (valuable and much prized in Tibet), some bundles of incense, and a small image of Amitabha—a rather pathetic little reminder of the country and people of whom I was so fond, and quite poignantly incongruous in my new surroundings of mosques, karguzars, mutawali-bashis, and all the sordid tawdriness of a decadent civilisation, and the various concomitants of the particular form of the Muhammadan religion practised in Persia.

The Tashi Lama's letter was only to tell me that matters were not going well with him. The Chinese had never forgiven him for his visit to India, and were only awaiting an opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon him, and he had a good many enemies in Lhasa and elsewhere. And he asked me, as one knowing all the facts of the case, and as a friend of his, to represent matters to the Indian Government, and to obtain for him some assurance of support in the event of his position becoming precarious.

All I could do in the circumstances was to forward his letter to the Government of India, but I felt a good deal

touched at this sign of confidence and affection. My sympathies went out, too, to the delegation, and I could imagine the miseries they had endured in their thick, woollen clothes, eminently unsuited for a hot or even a moderately warm climate, during the voyage up and down the Gulf, and at Bushire in the month of July.

I was to learn in my own person, a few years later, what the heat of the Bushire hinterland meant at that time of year.

Before leaving Meshad to return to Seistan I made a trip to Bujnurd, some 150 miles north-west of Meshad, whence I pushed on into the forest region which lies within the watershed of the basin of the Caspian Sea close to the Turkistan boundary. The semi-independent Khan of Bujnurd himself accompanied me on the trip, bringing with him a strong escort of his own men to protect the party against possible Turcoman raiding parties. Within two or three days' ride of Bujnurd we found ourselves in that wonderful, almost untouched sportsman's paradise—the no-man's land between Persia and Russian Turkistan—thickly wooded, hilly country, quite uninhabited, and swarming with game—tigers, deer, both large and small, wild pigs and small game galore, and on the upper and more open slopes of the mountains hill sheep and goats.

All this region has for generations been the happy hunting-ground of the Turcoman tribes, who sweep across it in periodical raids into the inhabited districts on the main Tehran-Meshad road, and the Persian Government has never been strong enough to restrain them or to protect its subjects and territory. The consequence is that a large area is quite denuded of population, and remains a wonderful game preserve.

On the evening of our arrival at the edge of our shooting ground we had just dismounted from our horses, and were preparing to pitch tents and encamp for the

night, when someone espied a horseman galloping across a bare patch on the mountain-side across the valley. Without an instant's loss of time the men of our escort seized their rifles, and blazed away at him merrily until he disappeared into the forest. He was the only Turcoman we saw, and no doubt he gave warning to his friends that we were a strong party, and that they had better give us a wide berth. We came across other signs of the Turcomans, however, now and then—burnt and abandoned houses and traces of former cultivation; and once on a heap of skeletons of men and horses in a nullah bed, where a party had evidently been ambushed and shot down.

We had a few days' wonderful sport in these ideal surroundings, regarding which I shall say something in a later chapter, and we returned safely to Meshad after a very pleasant trip.

Major Sykes returned to Meshad in November, and I posted off at once to Seistan, doing the first part of the journey as far as Birjand in a carriage—a most wearisome form of travelling, but more expeditious than by caravan. We found that brigands had been pretty active along the road, and we nearly fell in with them more than once—but I doubt if they would have interfered with me, even if we had done so.

The winter passed quietly at Seistan, the chief incident of interest being furnished by one of the famous Seistan blizzards. Some time during January, Captain Hunter and I were making one of our little tours in the eastern part of the district, and were encamped near the bank of the Helmund just above the dam, where the river is still untapped by irrigation channels. The weather was perfect—clear blue sky, bright sun, cool air—and there were few, if any, premonitory signs of what was in store for us. A light breeze from the N. or NNE. and a drop in the temperature at nightfall seemed to indicate a change

in the weather, but nothing more. But about midnight it began to blow in earnest, and by 2 a.m. there was a raging hurricane, and the temperature had dropped to below zero. All hands were soon busy in the freezing cold and howling blast, hammering in tent-pegs, securing miscellaneous objects, and trying to improvise some shelter for the horses. Meanwhile, the wind blew without respite or intermission, hour after hour, and seemed to increase rather than diminish in violence, and the harder it blew the colder it got. I have experienced a good many storms in different parts of the world—the wind on the Tuna plain at 16,000 ft. in mid-winter was no joke, and I have been on board ship in a typhoon in the China Seas—but for sheer malignant intensity I have never come across anything to beat a Seistan blizzard.

Morning found a dismal and shivering camp, but mercifully still under cover of our tents, and the horses were well rugged up and protected to some extent by the shelter of a high bank and a thicket of tamarisk bushes. There was nothing more to be done but to sit still and see it out, and try and keep ourselves warm. All that day and all the next night the storm lasted, and the following morning, when we ventured out to have a look round, we were greeted by a strange sight. The Helmund, here a broad deep river, flowing at five or six miles an hour, was one mass of floating blocks of ice—the whole surface of the stream covered with them, not frozen over, but bearing them along with the current, a striking testimony to the severity of the cold.

The blizzard lasted three days and three nights, and in our comfortable and sheltered camp we suffered nothing worse than discomfort and cold, but woebetide any wandering wretches caught in the storm far from home. During every such blizzard some human deaths are reported, and there is often considerable mortality among the flocks and herds, due partly to the cold and partly to

the floods caused by the heaped-up waters of the Helmund overflowing the adjacent flats.

I spent the next summer at Birjand, and a third winter in Seistan, and then decided that I must take leave and see something of the outside world again. The problem was how to get down to India. I dreaded the idea of a three weeks' ride on a camel across the desert to the railway terminus at Nushki with nothing but saline water to drink *en route*, and after careful enquiries I came to the conclusion that it might be possible to drive a car across the desert. It had never been done before, but it seemed worth a trial. It happened that at this time my friend Mr. Howson was on leave in India and due to return to Persia in March, so I asked him to buy me a cheap car in India, and to engage a good driver, and to come up on the car himself. This he did, and arrived safely on the borders of Seistan by the end of March without having experienced any very formidable difficulties *en route*.

So on the 1st of April, 1912, I started off with the driver, Casey, and my Persian servant Musahib. Stores of petrol and some soda-water had already been laid out at the various dak bungalows *en route*, so we had nothing to carry with us except our bedding and a suitcase or two, and some tinned provisions. Generally speaking, the desert presented no serious obstacles. The going was mostly pretty level, stony in places, and elsewhere light sand, and here and there patches of dead level "put" (the stratified clay surface of some formerly submerged area) baked by the sun to the hardness of brick, and in such places we could race along at our top speed.

The most difficult and trying portion was some twenty to twenty-five miles of undulating country, just after passing Kuh-Malik-Siah into British territory. Here the drainage from the hills had cut the surface into a succession of ridges and furrows. For the first few miles these lay in a parallel series only a few yards apart

—some quite shallow and others five to six feet in depth. Fortunately the action of the weather had worn away all sharp edges, and the existing camel track showed us where to follow the easiest gradient, so we were nowhere confronted with absolutely perpendicular ascents or descents, which, of course, would have been impracticable. But even so, it was bad enough—one continuous series of ups and downs—more like sailing over a rough sea than driving a self-respecting motor. But as we got farther on the ridges and furrows tended to widen, and merged gradually into mere undulations, and finally into the level desert.

Sand was now our only danger, and in making a detour from the usual track in order to try and avoid some sand-hills, we started on a stretch of some sixty miles, where there was no rest-house or water, but where we believed the going was better. All went well for the first thirty miles, and we were just congratulating ourselves on having accomplished half the distance safely when we were pulled up by a nasty little hill, not more than 20 to 30 feet in height, but with a soft, sandy surface. Here we stuck half-way up, and all our efforts either to advance or retreat were unavailing. So it was decided that one of us should walk on to the next bungalow, thirty miles farther, and bring or send back a couple of camels to haul us up the slope. Casey volunteered for this; and as it was thought that he would carry more weight with the camel-men than would my Persian servant, and as I had to stay by the car myself, it was so arranged, and about 5 p.m. he started off, carrying a little food and the last two bottles of soda-water.

Musahib and I settled down to pass the time as best we could, till the arrival of the camels, and we would have been quite happy except for a raging thirst. We had all worked pretty hard for a couple of hours during the heat of the afternoon trying to persuade the

car to mount the slope; and what with the exertion, and the heat, and the sand, we were very dry, and there was not a drop of soda-water left or any water within thirty miles of us. I was sitting rather dejectedly looking at the car when suddenly a bright idea struck me—why not make tea from the water in the radiator? No sooner thought of than done. A teapot was produced and held under the tap of the radiator and filled with still nearly boiling water, and there we were with a delightful beverage—tasting a trifle of iron rust, it is true, but quite palatable, and (as far as bacilli were concerned) exceptionally wholesome—it had certainly been well enough boiled during the course of the day! And the quantity removed from the radiator was not sufficient to make any real difference to the cooling system.

We slept peacefully on the sand, and early next morning were delighted to see a couple of camels with their driver appearing over the top of the slope. We hitched them on to the front axle with a rope, and set the engine going. The scared camels pulled with a will, and in a few minutes we were on top and out of trouble. Casey, who had found the camels on the road, had sent them along to us, and had continued the journey on foot to the dak bungalow, where we found him safe and well.

A day or two later we arrived at the railhead at Nushki, having taken five days to cover some 460 miles in comparative comfort, which otherwise would have meant two or three weeks of acute discomfort and intense boredom on a camel.



## CHAPTER IX

### CHAOS IN PERSIA

(1909-1912)

I SPENT the usual six to seven months in England very pleasantly, and returned to Persia in November. I had in the meantime been appointed Consul at Kerman, and I obtained permission to join my new post *viâ* Tehran, which would give me an opportunity of passing a few days at the capital and of making the acquaintance of our new Minister, Sir Walter Townley—an obvious advantage, the lack of which often constitutes a serious handicap to British Consuls in Persia appointed by the Indian Government and joining their posts direct without ever seeing the capital or meeting the Minister under whom they have to serve. I accordingly travelled by rail across Europe *viâ* Paris and Vienna, arriving eventually at Baku and so across the Caspian to Enzeli and by carriage to Tehran, after quite a humdrum journey compared with my previous one. Here I was kindly greeted by Sir Walter and Lady Susan Townley, and I stayed with them for a few days in the Legation in the city, as all the foreign community had now moved down from their summer quarters at Gulakek, etc.

I found a good many old friends at Tehran among the different communities, and was soon made *au fait* with the main outlines of the inner history of the last three years, of which I had hitherto only known the newspaper versions. And a melancholy enough record it was.

To give a full account of what had happened in Persia during that period would require a whole volume, and I shall not attempt it. But as some knowledge of the general conditions of the country at this time is essential in order to appreciate its subsequent history up to and during the Great War, I propose to give a brief outline of the principal events which had occurred since I was last in Tehran.

From the date of Muhammed Ali Shah's forced abdication, from one end of the country to the other, the story comprises one continuous record of unchecked and increasing outrage, robbery, and disorder. Several thick blue books dealing with the history of Persia during the period in question (1909-12) have been published, and anyone who takes the trouble to glance through their pages will be able to form some conception of what a state of anarchy can overtake a country which is still supposed to possess a Government and to rank amongst civilised nations. Month after month, from practically every province of the Persian kingdom, came the same reports with almost monotonous regularity: caravans looted, foreign subjects assaulted and robbed, tribesmen in revolt, gangs of brigands terrorising whole districts and capturing and looting important towns, and pretty nearly every road in the country unsafe for traffic.

I have often been impressed when reading the Persian blue books with what His Majesty's Minister at Tehran had to put up with in those troublous times. It seemed pretty bad sometimes to the Consul on the spot, who only had the misdemeanours of a single province to agitate him. But on the devoted head of His Majesty's Minister descended daily an avalanche of accumulated villainy from all points of the compass. And it was not as if he had a nice quiet capital to live in himself, where his only preoccupations were the back-slidings of the provinces. Tehran was far from being a bed of roses,

and anything (from an invasion of the Legation grounds by several thousand "bastis" to an attack on the city by an ex-Shah or some other claimant of the throne) could be expected at any time—to say nothing of kaleidoscopic Cabinet changes.

But in addition to the more commonplace incidents of robbery and murder, which might be regarded as chronic and inevitable, the period in question had included some events of really major importance which had a bearing on the subsequent history of Persia, and may be mentioned here.

To take constructive efforts first. The most important of these was perhaps the decision of the Persian Government to organise a "gendarmerie" under Swedish officers for the purposes of internal security. The steps leading up to this decision need not be recapitulated. It is enough to say that the condition of the trade roads (and especially the southern trade roads) urgently demanded some such measure. Both Great Britain and Russia agreed that a foreign-led gendarmerie was necessary, but owing partly to international jealousies, and partly to Persian susceptibilities, it was not possible to officer such a corps with either British or Russian officers. The solution was, clearly, to enlist the services of the officers of some small disinterested country, who, whilst fully capable of performing the professional part of their duties, would be uninfluenced by political motives or considerations. Sweden was approached on the subject, and, assured of the good-will and consent of the British and Russian Governments, she agreed to depute some of her officers for this purpose. Colonel Hjalmarsen was selected to command the force, and a small posse of officers, increased later from time to time, accompanied him to Tehran in the summer of 1911.

At the time of my arrival in Tehran (November 1912) the gendarmerie had already made remarkable progress.

The Swedes were good officers, and under their training and discipline the Persian rank and file had developed rapidly. It was an uphill task, and there were many difficulties to contend with, but the work went on steadily, and a business-like little force was gradually being created. I was taken round the lines by my friend, Major Uggla (who was afterwards to command the Shiraz gendarmerie force), and inspected the men on parade; and knowing something of what the old-fashioned Persian soldier was, I was much impressed with what I saw.

The pressure of events at Shiraz (of which more anon) had rather forced Colonel Hjalmarssen's hands, and he had been obliged, in order to try and maintain some sort of order there, to dispatch somewhat prematurely a small force of gendarmerie who had already been engaged with the tribesmen. Their training was still incomplete, and the result of the first engagement was not very successful; but their mere presence in Fars was earnest of better things to come, and produced an immediate effect in the province. It looked, in fact, as if a really constructive programme had at length been devised, although anyone who had studied Persian history could not help reflecting somewhat pessimistically upon the many promising schemes which had come to shipwreck in the past.

Another important event, also of a constructive character, during this period, was the engagement of a "Financial Adviser" from America to organise the finances of the country. Mr. Morgan Shuster was selected for this purpose, and arrived during 1911 with a small band of assistants, and they set to work with characteristic vigour to cleanse the Augean stable of the Persian Finance Ministry. Financial reform is a thankless task in Persia, and other foreign reformers, both before and since, have had to retire baffled from the scene. The rock which Mr. Shuster split over, however, was not so much Persian obstruction and reaction as his failure to recog-

nise and accept the diplomatic facts of the situation. He set out by refusing to acknowledge the special rights and privileges claimed by certain foreign nations in Persia. If Great Britain and Russia chose to make an agreement delimitating their "spheres of influence" in Persian territory that, he contended, was their affair, but there was no reason why Persia should recognise an arrangement regarding which she had not even been consulted.

This was all very well as an abstract proposition, and would have made a good argument in a handbook on International Law or in a debating society, but unfortunately it would not work in practice. Great Britain and Russia, however strongly Mr. Shuster might disapprove of their proceedings, and however logical were his contentions regarding Persia's absolute independence and sovereign integrity, were two nasty great ugly facts—and as a rule in this imperfect world it does not do to try and ignore facts, however inconvenient and however illogical they may appear. In a word, the task of the new Treasurer-General, without the support of the British and Russian Ministers, was hopeless. It was not that the two countries concerned were in any way opposed to Mr. Shuster and his reforms. On the contrary, they were prepared to assist and support him. But by studiously ignoring their interests and position *vis-à-vis* Persia he created unnecessary obstacles for himself, and this, combined with the difficulties inherent in his task, proved too much for him. Various unpleasant incidents occurred, and finally, under pressure from Russia, the Persian Government was compelled to dismiss him, and he left Persia for good in January 1912.

Another incident which occurred during Mr. Shuster's term of office as Treasurer-General was the "Stokes affair." Major C. B. Stokes was an officer of the Indian Army who had been Military Attaché to the British Legation at Tehran for some years, and during that

period had made himself master of the Persian language, and had become *persona grata* with a certain school of Young Persians. Major Stokes, in fact, sympathised with the Constitutional movement, and entered into very friendly relations with its protagonists, and in so doing he incurred a good deal of odium from the Russian official community in Persia, which was notoriously on the side of the Shah in the struggle for a democratic form of government. The success of the revolutionary movement in 1909 placed Major Stokes's friends in power, and greatly increased his influence and prestige. One of Mr. Shuster's first schemes on taking over the Treasurer-Generalship was the formation of a "Treasury Gendarmerie," and in looking round for a suitable officer to raise and command this force his eye fell on Major Stokes, and he soon came to the conclusion that he had found the ideal man for his purpose—a soldier well-versed in his profession, speaking both Persian and French fluently, and highly esteemed both as a man of character and as a personal friend by the members of the Persian administration—obviously, indeed, the one man of all others for the job.

Here again the fatal clash of divergent national interests wrecked a promising scheme. Russia not unnaturally looked askance at the appointment of a British officer to a post of such importance and influence, the scope of which would necessarily have to extend over the whole of Persia—over Russia's sphere of influence in the north as well as over the neutral and British spheres elsewhere; and Major Stokes's notorious anti-Russian sentiments constituted another very serious stumbling-block to the appointment. A somewhat acute controversy arose in consequence, a résumé of which will be found in the Blue Book, and eventually the scheme was abandoned, and Major Stokes also left Persia towards the end of 1911.

The incident is interesting chiefly as centring round the personality of Major Stokes—a man of great ability, high principle, and I think with the courage of his convictions more strongly developed than in the case of any other man I have ever met. It was a thousand pities that his qualifications and personality could not have been utilised for the benefit of Persia at this important juncture—but the fates were too strong.

As a contrast to these well-meant attempts at reconstruction on the part of the new régime, we find at the same time the forces of reaction and absolutism making a last desperate bid for power.

Muhammad Ali, the ex-Shah, after his forced abdication in 1909, had left the country and settled down in Vienna on a liberal pension. He remained quiescent for a couple of years, but during the summer of 1911, whether on his own initiative or encouraged by his entourage and friends in Persia or by foreign agents, he elected to make another bid for his lost throne. The history of how he ever succeeded in reaching Persian soil is still (and will probably always be) enveloped in a dense cloud of mystery. All that is certainly known is that he slipped away from Vienna where he was living quietly in retirement, and after traversing the whole of southern Russia he embarked at Baku undetected with a considerable following and a number of cases containing arms and ammunition, and was next heard of when he landed at Gumeshtepé, on the south-eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, about the middle of July 1911—a truly remarkable performance.

He was now in Persian Turcoman territory, and he soon rallied round him a miscellaneous force of these gentry and some other scattered remnants loyal to the old régime, and began a series of spasmodic and ill-regulated movements directed apparently against the capital. His Turcoman auxiliaries advanced as far as

Damgham on the Tehran-Meshad road, looting and laying waste, whilst the ex-Shah himself moved about rather aimlessly near the coast, and never advanced farther than within forty to fifty miles of the capital.

He and his supporters had, in fact, staged a somewhat grandiose scheme which failed utterly in execution. The actual condition of the Persian Government at the moment was one of almost hopeless chaos, and there can be little doubt that had Muhammad Ali Mirza had the pluck and the energy to march straight away upon the capital, he would have met with but little resistance. Russia, although she, of course, disavowed complicity in the affair, undoubtedly had a sneaking sympathy with the ex-Shah's ambition, and it is certain that no opposition would have come from her; whilst we were not in a position to do anything even if we had wanted to. In a week or two Muhammad Ali might have been on his throne again, and the whole subsequent history of Persia completely changed. It could not have been much more disastrous than was the case under the democratic régime.

The Persian Government, however, rallied in a really creditable manner. The Majlis passed a Bill proclaiming martial law, and offered 1,000 tomans for Muhammad Ali Mirza, dead or alive, whilst two small expeditionary forces were hastily organised and dispatched to deal with the rebels. These columns were well and vigorously handled (chiefly by the famous Ephraim, now Chief of Police in Tehran, and some Bakhtiari chiefs), and attacked and scattered the ex-Shah's motley gathering, capturing and hanging on the spot several of the ring-leaders. Muhammad Ali himself fled ignominiously to the Caspian and again took ship, and by the middle of September the menace was over. The ex-Shah still hung about at Askabad and the neighbourhood for some months, a source of some anxiety and a focus for intrigues, but he was no longer a real danger, and he



eventually retired to Odessa, on the Persian Government agreeing to continue his pension and to pay off his following.

Meanwhile, however, his younger brother, Salar-ed-Daulah, had raised the flag of revolt, and had proclaimed the ex-Shah to the west. Supported by a considerable body of tribesmen and other riff-raff, he occupied in turn Kermanshah, Hamadan, and other towns, and advanced to within some fifty miles of the capital with a force estimated at about 10,000 men. Here this menace petered out also. The small force under Ephraim and the Bakhtiari Khans, having defeated the ex-Shah to the east, marched rapidly to the west and fell upon and dispersed Salar-ed-Daulah's heterogeneous army. They fled westward, the Prince with them. He continued to give trouble for some considerable time, but he never again actually menaced the capital, and he also disappeared from the scene during the course of the following year.

There is no doubt that the danger, whilst it lasted, was a very real one. The constitutional régime had not made itself very popular during its two years of existence, and the ex-Shah still had many adherents, disguised or open, who would have been only too glad to welcome him back and to see an autocratic government restored. How little the Persians themselves had to do with these victories can be seen by the composition of the Government forces which saved the situation. Again, as at the time of the 1909 Revolution, it was thanks to Armenians and Bakhtiari that the monarchist forces were defeated, and to them alone. The "Young Persian" Party had been vociferous enough during the course of the constitutional agitation, and had furnished plenty of orators and writers. But of men of action there had been a singular dearth, and it is certain that had it not been for their Armenian and Bakhtiari supporters the constitution would never

have been won in 1909, and it would with equal certainty have been overthrown in 1911.

Simultaneously with these two movements, a third Royalist force, under one Shuja-ed-Daulah, was attacking Tabriz—an operation which ended, in the usual topsy-turvy way with things in Persia, with Shuja being appointed Governor of the province, and agreeing (for a consideration) to cease his campaign on behalf of the ex-Shah. And in addition (he is a mere incident in a rather hectic drama) we find our old friend, the brigand, Naib Hussain, attacking and capturing the large and flourishing town of Kashan on the main road between Tehran and Isfahan.

These were the major events in the Persian drama during this troublous period. It would be impossible even to summarise the smaller incidents, but it is sufficient to say that murder, robbery, and revolt were rife in every province of the kingdom.

I have made no mention of the state of affairs in Fars during this time, but as I was now destined to proceed to that large and turbulent province myself, it will be necessary to say a few words about it.

But first as to how I came to go there. It happened that whilst I was at Tehran the Consul-General of Tabriz applied for leave, and Sir Walter Townley decided to send there Mr. Smart who was at that time Consul at Shiraz, and it was arranged that instead of my going to Kerman I should be posted to Shiraz in Mr. Smart's place.

The circumstances connected with the Shiraz Consulate were somewhat peculiar. Shiraz is the capital of the immense province of Fars, which occupies a large area of Southern Persia, and which is bounded on the south by the Persian Gulf for a distance of some 400 miles. The area of the province is over 44,000 square miles—nearly equal to the whole of England and considerably

larger than either Ireland or Scotland. Statistics and details, however, regarding this region can be found in any work of reference; it was the political situation which chiefly affected and interested me.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view the most important factor in Fars politics is the existence of the two great nomad tribes—the Khamseh, or Arabs, and the Kashkais, of Turkish origin.

It is to these two tribes, their rivalries, their internal feuds, and their migrations, that the troublous condition of the province of Fars has been mainly due. There are other nomad tribes elsewhere in Persia, such as the Bakhtiari, etc. But as a rule they occupy a specified tribal area, and in their movements do not, except to a minor extent, impinge upon settled and populated areas or cross main highways. But with the Fars tribes the reverse is the case. The Kashkais, for the most part, occupy as their winter quarters tracts of country south and south-east of Shiraz; but the nomad portion of them (some sections are sedentary), in their movement towards their summer uplands to the north-west, cross the main Shiraz-Bushire road, passing within a few miles of the city of Shiraz, and traversing various more or less inhabited and cultivated areas.

The region covered by the Khamseh tribes lies more to the north, and here too a similar movement takes place, and the tribal migration similarly impinges on settled areas and crosses the main Shiraz-Isfahan road. It will readily be understood how the bi-annual movement of thousands of families, with their flocks and herds, preceded and escorted by armed mounted men, must derange the ordinary life of the countryside, and how liable the

<sup>1</sup> I should like here to refer (as indeed everyone writing about Persia must do sooner or later) to Lord Curzon's monumental standard work, "Persia," which is packed with general and detailed information, and which, although published over thirty years ago, is still indispensable for any student of Persian history and affairs.

process is to lead to disorders. The tribes are, in fact, great semi-independent entities, alien in race, origin, and language from the population of Persia proper, and owing but a scant and uncertain allegiance to the Persian Government and its representatives.

The degree of their loyalty depends, to a considerable extent, upon the personalities of the two "Ilkhanis," or Chiefs of the respective tribes for the time being. In this respect the record of the Khamseh is the more satisfactory of the two. The Ilkhaniship is hereditary in the "Kawami" family, the head of which holds the title of "Kawam-ul-Mulk," and during recent years the incumbent had, on the whole, maintained a loyal attitude towards the Persian Government, and had endeavoured, with varying success, to keep his tribesmen in order and to restrain them from pillage and other outrages.

The Ilkhaniship of the Kashkai tribes is also hereditary, and is vested in a family where it has been disputed during the present generation between several brothers and half-brothers. Of these the senior and most important is the "Saulat-ed-Daulah." It is unnecessary to enter more fully into these tribal complexities, but the names of the Kawam-ul-Mulk and the Saulat-ed-Daulah will occur somewhat frequently in any account of Fars politics, and indeed the history of the province generally centres round their mutual quarrels and intrigues.

Besides these two main groups—and there are in Fars various other minor tribes, the most notorious and ill-conditioned of which being the Boir Ahmadis and the Kuhgeluis—there was a chronic sprinkling of highway robbers living in mountain fastnesses with bands of varying dimensions.

It will be admitted that the task of the Governor-General in maintaining order and collecting revenue in this huge area, ill-provided with roads and seamed

throughout with mountain chains and deserts, is not an enviable one; and whether due to their own shortcomings or to the inherent difficulties of the task, the record up to date had not been reassuring. There was nothing but one long unbroken story of robbery, murder, rebellion, and inter-tribal feuds. One Governor-General after another appeared on the scene, became involved for or against one or other of the tribal groups, and vanished in a welter of confusion.

As prospective Consul of Shiraz, I spent my remaining few days at Tehran in a careful study of the recent history of Fars, and naturally followed with a special interest the personal experiences of my immediate predecessors. I found that none of them could complain of lack of variety and adventure. Taking the period since the revolution alone, in the year 1910, Mr. Bill (like myself a member of the Indian Political Department, afterwards killed during the Great War) was attacked by robbers near the northern borders of Fars whilst *en route* to Tehran. There was a brisk skirmish, during which he pursued the robbers for some distance; but his two Indian Sawars were both killed, and the robbers escaped.

During the year 1911 Fars, in common with the rest of Persia, experienced an exceptional degree of anarchy. A new Governor-General, the Nizam-es-Saltaneh, took office early in April, and within ten days he had raised a hornets' nest, and had set the whole province by the ears. Before his arrival the Kawam-ul-Mulk had been acting as Governor, but the Nizam was a friend and partisan of the Saulat-ed-Daulah, and he almost immediately placed the Kawam and his brother, the Nasr-ed-Daulah, under arrest on some trumped-up charge, and threatened to have them both executed. Pressure was, however, brought to bear upon him from Tehran to forgo this measure, and he was ordered by the Persian Government

to send the two brothers under safe conduct to Bushire, whence they were to proceed to Europe under pledge not to return to Persia during the Nizam's term of office in Fars. Accordingly, after some demur and energetic protests from the Nizam, the two brothers were dispatched from Shiraz in May under escort of a small force of the Governor-General's guards and a few of their hereditary enemies, the Kashkais. The Governor-General's escort soon returned to Shiraz, and some thirty miles out a treacherous attack was made on the little caravan by the Kashkais, and the Nasr-ed-Daulah and the Kawam's head servant were shot dead.

The Kawam himself happened by good fortune to be riding a little ahead of the others, and escaped injury. He immediately turned his horse off the road and galloped away, and making a long detour he arrived safely at his house in Shiraz the next day. Here, by another piece of good luck, he found the Indo-European Telegraph Department Doctor, Dr. Woollatt, who was attending one of the family, and disguising himself in a European topi and coat, he rode with the doctor to the Consulate, where he was given "bast" (sanctuary), in accordance with old Persian custom, by the Consul, Mr. Knox.

As may be imagined, these occurrences fanned into flame every dormant antagonism throughout the province. The hereditary enemies of the Kawam clamoured for his blood. His friends and tribesmen rallied to his assistance. For five months he remained in refuge in the Consulate, whilst all Fars hummed and simmered with excitement. The Governor-General, of course, disclaimed all knowledge of or participation in the plot to murder the two brothers, but there is little doubt that he must have been privy to it, and that he shared the Saulat's disappointment at the escape of the principal figure. He hinted, not obscurely, once or twice to Mr. Knox that the presence of the Kawam in the Consulate might lead to regrettable

incidents, but he was warned of the serious consequences which would certainly follow any overt action against the Consulate, and nothing further ensued.

In June a significant incident occurred in the attempt of 400 Sirbaz (soldiers) to take "bast" in the Consulate on the plea of not having been paid for months. They were refused admittance, and endeavoured to force their way in. Firing began (it is said by the Sirbaz), and the Indian escort was compelled to reply. The Sirbaz were driven back, three being killed and two wounded, whilst one Sawar was wounded. The incident was said to have no political significance, but occurring just at this time it had an ugly look.

And as if the situation in Shiraz was not sufficiently involved without any further complication, a small body of tribesmen (the Bulwardis), with some grievance of their own, must needs invade the city during July and establish themselves in its eastern quarter, where they remained for some weeks, constantly firing off their rifles and keeping everyone in a state of chronic alarm. In September the Arabs also invaded the town on one side, and the Saulat, with 1,000 of his tribesmen, arrived and took up a position just outside the walls on the other, and there was cannonading and perpetual rifle-firing. As Mr. Knox said in a dispatch written about this time<sup>1</sup>:

"On the following night firing broke out generally through the town. This was, however, of a more or less inoffensive character. The Bulwardis and Governor-General's men merely shooting in the air to denote vigilance, and many of the inhabitants joining in from the roofs in accordance with a time-honoured convention by which the people imply dissatisfaction with their Governor, and proclaim that the town is in a state of disorder."

<sup>1</sup> See Blue Book, "Persia," No. 4 (1912), 140.

And then followed the usual comic touch indispensable from all Persian affairs, however serious and even tragic they may be in reality:

“On the next morning the Nizam-es-Saltaneh attempted to reassert his authority by blowing from a gun an elderly robber who had been in prison for many months . . . and at the same time two of Kawam-ul-Mulk’s cooks were led out to be hanged.” (These men were afterwards reprieved.)

Meanwhile, however, just as everything seemed to be working up for a real row royal, the Persian Government, in the midst of their own overwhelming distractions, as described earlier in this chapter, had not been altogether unmindful of the state of affairs in Fars. Some weeks previously they had given the Governor-General his *congé*, and had repeatedly telegraphed to him to remove himself from the province; and finally, early in October, he and his henchman, the Saulat-ed-Daulah, quitted Shiraz, and the Nizam-es-Saltaneh at any rate disappears from the scene.

The next day the Kawam-ul-Mulk left the shelter of the Consulate. He was greeted by a large assemblage of townspeople and tribesmen, and returned to his house—being fired at *en route*, I may mention, by a sporting brigand who was just then occupying one of the quarters of the city. The Kashkais retreated to their winter quarters, but for weeks they terrorised the trade-routes, and were especially active in destroying the line of the Indo-European Telegraph Department and in ill-treating the wretched linesmen sent out to repair it. This, however, was so usual a form of tribal light-heartedness, that it had come to be looked upon as a normal symptom of their migrations, and called for no special comment.

All this devastating anarchy, however, combined with the interruption of the trade routes and the formidable



list of outrages and robberies committed on British subjects, had been watched with growing concern by the Home and Indian Governments, and it had at length become evident that intervention of some kind or another was necessary, if only as a temporary measure, to maintain some semblance of orderly government and to ensure reasonable safety for travellers and merchandise in Southern Persia. It was decided, therefore, to dispatch an Indian Cavalry Regiment to South Persia to act as a garrison to the Shiraz and Isfahan Consulates with a reserve at Bushire. The 39th Cavalry (Central Indian Horse) was selected for this purpose by the Government of India, and their first two squadrons landed at Bushire in October, and were at once pushed up the road to Shiraz, two others following a little later.

The third detachment was detained at Bushire temporarily, and left there towards the end of December, escorting the new Consul, Mr. W. A. Smart (who was coming to relieve Mr. Knox), and also some treasure, whilst another detachment left Shiraz, under Major Birdwood (brother of Field-Marshal Sir Wm. Birdwood), to meet the column near Kazerun, and to accompany it to Shiraz. On the 24th December the detachment from Shiraz was fired on by some "tufangchis" (riflemen) from a tower at the head of one of the notorious "Kotals" (passes) near Kazerun, and lost one Sawar killed and one wounded, but they continued their journey, and on the 26th they joined up with the other detachment escorting Mr. Smart at a caravanserai some eleven to twelve miles from Kazerun. After the two parties had joined hands, and just as they were starting to ride into Kazerun, a general attack was made on them by tribesmen from the caravanserai and the surrounding hills. They fought a difficult but skilful rearguard action to that town, harassed by sharpshooters and a growing body of the tribesmen the whole way.

During the retreat Mr. Smart, who was riding with the rearguard, was wounded in the leg by a bullet fired by a young tribesman at a distance of about thirty yards, and fell off his horse without his loss having been noticed by anyone. The troops continued their retreat, hard pressed, and guarding their large caravan of mules with great difficulty, and Mr. Smart (who was very much *persona grata* with the Persians, and spoke the language perfectly), after having been first robbed by a passing tribesman, was shortly afterwards discovered lying by the roadside by a friendly young chief with whom he was acquainted. This man immediately mounted him on his own horse, and conducted him to the head man of the tribe (the Kashkulis—a branch of the Kashkais), who had his wound dressed as well as possible, and took him off to his camp a few miles away. Here Mr. Smart remained for some days, and was treated, as he says, “with almost embarrassing kindness.” His wound was not serious, and on the 29th December he was allowed to proceed to Kazerun, and eventually he arrived at Shiraz without further incident. The casualties suffered by the C.I.H. on this occasion were two men killed and nine wounded, and the British Consul wounded and missing.

The whole affair was typical of the state of Southern Persia at this time: the trade roads, terrorised by so-called “road guards,” stationed by their chiefs at every town and hamlet along the road, who stopped caravans and levied “road cess” (actually blackmail) at a constantly increasing rate per mule—all armed to the teeth with modern small-bore rifles which they were always ready to use on the smallest provocation. In addition to these more or less legalised and established robbers, there were the tribesmen themselves, whether sedentary or nomad, all armed and all warlike, to say nothing of bands of regular professional brigands who emerged now

and then from their mountain-fastnesses and simply looted caravans wholesale *sans phrase*. Equally characteristic was the treatment of Mr. Smart who, once he had been recognised as a friend and as holding the position of British Consul, was received with the greatest kindness and hospitality by the very people who had attacked his escort and narrowly missed killing him.

Anarchical conditions continued to prevail in Fars during the earlier part of 1912—constant robberies on the trade roads, wholesale destruction of the telegraph line, and inter-tribal feuds—but the constructive measures mentioned earlier in the chapter began to take shape as the year progressed. First some Swedish officers arrived with the nucleus of the Fars brigade of gendarmerie, and set to work to organise their force. This programme unfortunately received a check during the month of August, when the officer in command (Major Siefert) somewhat rashly attacked a body of Kashkais under the Saulat-ed-Daulah, who were threatening the peace of the district, and suffered rather a serious defeat. But the set-back was only temporary, and was due rather to inexperience and lack of preparation than to any deficiency of martial qualities.

A new Governor-General, in the person of Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh, was selected by the Persian Government with the approval of the British Minister, and after prolonged delays at Tehran, due to lack of financial support, he finally set forth and arrived at Shiraz towards the end of 1912. The Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh was Governor-General during almost the whole period of my tenure of the Consularship, and I shall have occasion to refer to him fairly frequently later.

Finally, it was decided by H.M. Government on the advice of the British Minister to make certain grants to the Persian Government specifically for the benefit of the Fars administration and of the Fars gendarmerie.

These funds were to be paid through the medium of the British Consul, whose duty it would be to exercise general supervision over their expenditure.

I studied the records of all these events with growing apprehension. It was clear that the Shiraz Consulship was no sinecure, and that one might confidently anticipate a troublesome time there. How troublesome, and indeed in some respects how tragic it was to be, I did not foresee when I left Tehran about the middle of November for my new post.

## CHAPTER X

### CONSUL AT SHIRAZ

(1912-1914)

I TRAVELLED in luxury as far as Kum, about 100 miles, in the Minister's car, accompanied by Sir Walter and Lady Susan Townley. Here we separated, and I went on alone in the usual Persian carriage as far as Isfahan, where I stayed a few days with the Consul-General, Mr. T. G. Grahame. Here I met also Lieutenant Bullock, of the Indian Army, a young officer who had come to Persia to study the language, and had been attacked and robbed on the way up from Ahwaz. His Indian orderly was wounded by a rifle bullet and died a few days later, and he himself was stripped to the shirt and rather badly knocked about, and the whole of his kit was stolen. All the roads round Isfahan, in fact, were unsafe, and Mr. Grahame kindly arranged with the Bakhtiari Governor-General, the Sardar-i-Jang, for an escort of his tribesmen to accompany me to the frontier of Fars.

So, escorted by a motley but cheery and very effective bodyguard of some 100 mounted Bakhtiaris, I continued my journey south to Yezdikhast, where I met Mr. Smart on his way up from Shiraz. He was likewise accompanied by a large and picturesque escort of tribesmen (Khamseh Arabs), provided by the Kawam-ul-Mulk, so after spending the night together at Yezdikhast we exchanged escorts, and each continued on our way. I reached Shiraz on the 5th December without incident,

and was met a mile or so from the city by my old friend, Colonel J. A. Douglas, Commanding the 39th Central Indian Horse, six squadrons of which fine regiment were now at Shiraz.

The Consulate itself is a small one-storied four- to five-roomed building, standing in a walled garden some half-mile from the city of Shiraz, the permanent escort occupying quarters actually in the garden, whilst the extra infantry escort and the C.I.H. were accommodated in adjoining gardens. As usual in Persia, the word "bagh" denotes rather a "grove" than a "garden" as we understand the word. In this barren country, where for many miles one sees neither trees nor water, it is delightful at the end of a long day's march to enter one of these cool, shady groves, thickly planted with willows and poplars, and with little murmuring water-channels running all through. Most of the Shiraz gardens, besides the usual willows and poplars, have avenues of alternate plane and cypress trees, the contrasting foliage of which provides a most picturesque effect. And there are also masses of rose-bushes in every open glade.

The normal escort of the Shiraz Consulate, as in most of our Consulates in Persia, consists of ten or twelve Sawars from an Indian Cavalry regiment, who keep guard at the Consulate gate, and accompany the Consul on visits of ceremony and tours in the country, etc. These men and their horses occupied buildings in the Consulate garden itself near the main gate. But when I arrived at Shiraz in December 1912 I found that besides the usual escort of Sawars there were six squadrons of an Indian Cavalry Regiment, as mentioned above, and seventy to eighty Indian infantrymen as well. The cavalry occupied barracks which had recently been constructed for them in a walled enclosure just opposite the Consulate gate, whilst the infantry were accommodated in a walled garden close by. This augmented escort owed its origin

to the troubled state of the country, but for various reasons it appeared to me at the time excessive, and in many ways embarrassing, and I soon had my fears on the matter confirmed.

The very day of my arrival Colonel Douglas informed me that some of his officers proposed going out on a shooting excursion along the southern road in the direction of Kazerun. In view of what I had seen and heard of the conditions of the country round about Shiraz, I regarded the proposal with some misgiving; but as the Governor-General had given his consent, and as the party were to be accompanied by a strong guard of their own regiment, I raised no objection. This was on the 5th December. On the 10th the party, consisting of two British officers and some twenty-four men, left Shiraz, and on the 11th they were ambushed and attacked some thirty miles out by a band of mounted robbers, estimated at 200 to 300 in number, who opened a hot fire upon them from both sides of the road. The Sawars dismounted, attacked the robbers, and drove them off. They retired in a north-westerly direction, carrying off a certain number of mules with them, some belonging to the cavalry and some to a caravan which had been following behind. There was a good deal of promiscuous firing, during which several of the tribesmen were killed or wounded, and also three or four gendarmes who happened to be on the spot, and had joined in. Our casualties were small, but they included one tragic loss—that of Captain Eckford, of the Central India Horse, a most promising and popular officer. He was shot through the head by a stray bullet, and died almost immediately.

It was an inauspicious beginning to my term as Consul at Shiraz. We all blamed ourselves after the event, but as a matter of fact, such incidents were inevitable in the circumstances which existed at that time in Southern Persia. It was never ascertained for certain who the

assailants were, but it was always believed that they belonged to the Boir Ahmadi tribe, which enjoyed a very bad reputation. And as far as we could make out the attack was not made of malice prepense upon our troops as such. The band appears to have been out marauding, and to have laid an ambush on the main road on the chance of picking up a caravan of merchandise. It was sheer bad luck that our men happened to have stumbled into the trap, and worse luck that one chance bullet should have ended a gallant and promising career. Beyond this, and except as a symptom of the disordered state of the country, the incident had no special significance.

But it was a most distressing and disturbing event. The Governor-General, the Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh, who had been specially selected for this post, and who had since his arrival in the previous month been hard at work trying to restore some sort of order, was overwhelmed by the disaster, the more so as he foresaw the difficulties which it must involve with the British and with his friend and supporter, Sir Walter Townley; and his reports to the Persian Government displayed both his distress and his helplessness.

"What could I do more than I did?" he says. "What means had I at my disposal in this country of robbers and thieves? I did all that was in my power. But the banditism of the tribes is well known." And so on.

And the Persian Government were equally perturbed. Demands were of course made upon them for the immediate and exemplary punishment of the offenders, but without money and without trained forces at their disposal no effective action was possible. It was in fact all part and parcel of the deplorable situation in Persia which H.M. Government and the Persian Government were just setting about to remedy. We were advancing money for the reform of the Administration, and we were supporting the formation of a gendarmerie force. Both measures



required time to produce effect, and it was useless to try and hasten matters unduly. We were undoubtedly moving in the right direction, and it was best to persevere in a really constructive policy rather than to be hustled into some premature action which would do more harm than good. The dispatch of a British force to exact retribution would have involved us in vast and incalculable expense, and would probably have led to the break-up of Persia; and hasty ill-organised efforts on the part of the Persian Government would certainly have resulted in a fiasco.

This view of the matter was accepted by the Minister and by H.M. Government, and whilst not withdrawing our demands for the eventual punishment of the guilty tribesmen, we proceeded to try and carry out a constructive programme with the object of laying the foundation for a more stable administration in the future.

A word here regarding the new Governor-General. The Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh was a very charming specimen of a Persian grandee—a tall, handsome man, with the most delightful manners, well educated and speaking fluently both French and German—and our official and personal relations were for long of the friendliest description. He was hampered and restricted to a very considerable extent in his efforts to improve the administration, as all Persian officials must necessarily be, by the strength of bad old customs, by the reactionary element among the Mullahs and others, and above all by the immemorial prescriptive rights of innumerable grafters and parasites. But within his inevitable limitations the Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh proved himself a capable and an efficient Governor, and he undoubtedly did his best to save his province from anarchy. He at once entered upon friendly relations with the Kawam-ul-Mulk, and supported him in his efforts to keep his own tribesmen in order; and one of his first acts, after taking over the Governorship, was to restore some kind of cohesion and unity amongst the

Kashkais by reappointing the Saulat-ed-Daulah as Ilkhani—for unsatisfactory as the Saulat-ed-Daulah had always been, he was at any rate less unsatisfactory than any other possible incumbent, and he was still capable, with the Governor-General's support, of holding his tribesmen together to some extent.

For the rest, the administration lay chiefly in the hands of Europeans. As his representative in the all-important region of finance, the Treasurer-General, M. Monard, appointed one of his compatriots, M. Stas, who joined his post in January and proved himself an admirable official. He was a quiet, shrewd little man, absolutely honest and straightforward, with a good knowledge of the Persians and their ways, and pliant and tactful enough to get his own way without hopelessly antagonising the vested interests alluded to above. He was ably assisted by his second-in-command, a Persian appointed from Tehran, one Mustafa Khan, who was, I think, the most honest and capable Persian official that it has been my fortune to meet.

Their task was to all appearance a well-nigh hopeless one. The provincial Treasury was bankrupt. There was no money and very little income and no means of enforcing the payment of taxes, and the salaries of the majority of the officials, and of the soldiers and police, were months in arrear. Fortunately at this stage H.M. Government consented to make an advance of £30,000 to the Persian Government, specially for the use of the Fars administration. This money was remitted to the branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia at Shiraz, and was paid over to the Finance Agent from time to time by the British Consul, who thus kept some kind of control over it, and was able, to some extent, to stipulate for its proper use; and in this I received every assistance from M. Stas, who was only too anxious to have the money properly utilised and honestly expended. During the following year a

further sum of £50,000 from the British loan made to the Persian Government during that year, was similarly set aside for the use of the Fars administration; and although the whole of this did not reach us, it undoubtedly eased matters considerably, and in fact these two subventions (together with the sums allotted separately for the gendarmerie) rescued the provincial Treasury from bankruptcy, and rendered possible the restoration of the administrative machinery.

Similarly, in the case of the gendarmerie, it was only the funds provided by H.M. Government that enabled this force to organise and establish itself. During the financial year 1913-14 a sum of £100,000 was advanced for the use of the gendarmerie, and £40,000 during 1914-15. This money also was paid in instalments through the intermediary of the British Consul into the account of the Officer Commanding the Fars gendarmerie, and the Consul was thus able to keep a check on its expenditure. The results were not altogether satisfactory—certainly not commensurate with the amounts expended—but at any rate the Swedish officers were enabled to organise and equip a respectable force, and by the time the war began the gendarmerie had established themselves firmly on the main roads, and, in spite of many set-backs and much local hostility and opposition, their influence was making itself felt, and was increasing daily throughout the province of Fars.

But in addition to the gendarmerie, we had to reckon with the existence of the so-called regular forces of the Persian Army—the discreditable band of scarecrows who masqueraded as soldiers in Persia in those days. My first idea was to try and secure their complete abolition, and to let them be replaced by the gendarmerie. But this proved impracticable for two reasons: first, because certain interested persons desired the retention of the so-called “Army” as constituting a valuable field for

peculation; and secondly, because the Swedish officers very rightly demurred at being called upon to fulfil certain functions which were not in their proper line, and which would have brought them a good deal of local unpopularity—such, for example, as enforcing the payment of revenue from recalcitrant persons, villages, tribesmen, etc., and other similar duties which might have been imposed upon them by the Governor-General were they the only armed force in the province. It was necessary therefore for M. Stas to agree to allot certain funds for the maintenance of this force, although both he and I knew very well that the great bulk of the money would be utterly wasted. I shall describe lower down our well-meant but abortive efforts to secure some measure of efficiency in this branch of the administration.

As soon as we had recovered from the paralysing shock of poor Captain Eckford's death, we all settled down to get the administrative machinery, oiled by British money, into some sort of working order. There was money enough to make a start, at any rate, and to carry on for the time being. With M. Stas in the Treasury, the Swedish officers responsible for the gendarmerie, and the British Consul doling out monthly subsidies to both, and therefore in a position to regulate expenditure and to ensure efficiency to some extent, progress was more rapid than was generally the case in a Persian province. The Governor-General was a man of very wide experience in administrative matters, and was prepared to support and encourage a moderate degree of progress, as long as the reformers did not try to go too fast, or to thwart or challenge his authority. As stated above, he had from the first made a point of securing the good-will of those two very important factors in the provincial situation—the Ilkhanis of the two great tribal groups—and, clever old diplomat that he was, he was thus able, whilst maintaining friendly relations with them both, to play off one

against the other in the event of either of them threatening to become too powerful or otherwise troublesome.

One of the very first uses to which our British money was put was to make an advance to the Kawam, to enable him to undertake a punitive expedition against one of the sections of his own tribesmen who were in open revolt. He was successful in this, and reduced the malcontents to submission, and hanged their leader; and afterwards proceeded farther afield and marched through the eastern districts of the province, which were completely out of hand, restoring the Government's and his own authority as he passed.

At the time of my arrival the tiny and half-organised force of gendarmerie was somewhat under a cloud, owing to the misadventure with the Kashkais during the summer, as related in the last chapter; but during April 1913 they were reinforced by a fresh contingent from Tehran, and first under Major Siefert, and later under Colonel Ugglä, gradually made good, and began to assert their influence. During the course of the year 1913 they were able to occupy the whole of the north to south trade route through Fars—from beyond Yezdikhast in the north to Bushire in the south. There was, of course, opposition, and some fighting here and there, and a vast amount of underground intrigue on the part of the tribesmen and village headmen along the road, who saw their perquisites, in the shape of "rahdari" (road-cess), vanishing rapidly; but the Swedish officers were brave and capable men, and they had the inestimable advantage of receiving regular funds, and of being able to pay their men and to meet their expenses. "Money talks" everywhere, but nowhere perhaps more loudly and clearly than in the poor, impecunious, corrupt Persia of that period.

Colonel Ugglä, who took over the command during the summer of 1913, made an admirable Commandant—tactful, suave, a good linguist, and a good organiser. He

was the very man for this difficult post. And the undoubted success which the gendarmerie enjoyed at this time, and for some time after the outbreak of war, must be chiefly attributed to him.

With the arrival of reinforcements for the gendarmerie, the necessity for retaining so large an escort of British troops at Shiraz disappeared, and the Central India Horse, and the infantry escort, marched down the road unmolested and returned to India, leaving the normal little Consular escort of ten Indian Sawars.

From the social point of view, it was sad to see them go. Their presence at Shiraz made all the difference to life at this out-of-the-way place. Polo—and good polo—three times a week, shooting parties all through the winter, and pleasant evenings in the mess were a welcome change from the monotony and solitude of the ordinary Persian out-station. But in other ways their departure was a relief. Their presence at Shiraz was a constant temptation for the local young bloods to have a shot at the foreigners, and such attacks and other unpleasant incidents were of frequent occurrence—all of them a source of anxiety both to the Governor-General and to myself, as one never knew when we might not be confronted with another tragedy like that of Captain Eckford—and indeed on several occasions the repetition of such incidents was only narrowly averted.

With their departure the situation resumed a more normal aspect. The Governor-General felt that he was now master in his own house, for, even if most of his chief executives were Europeans, they were at any rate employés of the Persian Government, and so more or less subject to his control. The Persians are curious people. Like the Chinese they have an immense regard for “face,” and it is possible to maintain very pleasant relations with them, and even to secure definite results, if one is careful always to preserve appearances.

All through 1913 steady progress was made in every branch of the administration, and the behaviour of the tribes was really exemplary. I made a point of keeping on good personal terms with both the Ilkhanis, and visited the Saulat-ed-Daulah in his camp, both during the spring and the autumn migrations of the tribe. It was a most interesting and instructive experience, and carried one back in a moment from the modern world, with its railways, motors, and innumerable civilised conventions, to immemorial patriarchal times and conditions. The tribesmen moved along well-recognised routes—each section keeping to its own line of country. There, in one of the open valleys through which lay the line of march, one saw a whole community on the trek—men, women, children, cows, horses, donkeys, sheep, and goats—moving all in a mass, extending over miles of country, the men and bigger boys all mounted and armed; the women and small children walking or riding on donkeys, etc., and the tents and household paraphernalia piled on all available animals. What took my fancy most, I think, was to see how the little new-born lambs were carried along. Thrown over the back of a mule or donkey is a large piece of sacking on each side of which are stitched three upright compartments or pockets. Into each pocket is inserted a lamb, tail downwards, head and forefeet protruding; and so the little creatures travel along, bleating plaintively now and then, but on the whole quite happy and apparently enjoying themselves thoroughly, and regarding the scenery with mild but intelligent interest. They present an indescribably comical, and at the same time touching little picture of primitive simplicity.

The Ilkhani, of course, travels and lives in some state. His camp is an imposing affair, with a large marquee as the "Darbar" (meeting) place and (at any rate, when I was visiting him) the banqueting hall, and numerous smaller tents round about. A cavalcade of dashing horse-

men used to meet me a mile or so out, and escort me to the camp, where I was ceremoniously received and hospitably entertained. The formal meeting and conversation which ensued took place in the big tent, the Ilkhani and myself facing the entrance and the leading men and councillors, relatives, etc., in two rows at right angles on both sides, all seated on rugs and cushions, with the servants, riflemen, and lesser fry grouped promiscuously behind us and round the doorway.

About noon an imposing repast would make its appearance. A leather cloth would first be spread on the ground in the centre of the tent, and a procession of servants would bring in the numerous dishes. When all was ready, we gathered round and seated ourselves cross-legged (the Persians themselves generally kneel and squat on their heels) on the ground. The great flat pancakes of unleavened bread, a foot or more across, served as plates, and fingers did universal duty as spoons, knives, and forks—a small spoon being sometimes produced for my special benefit. The viands were profuse and admirable alike in quality and cooking—heaped dishes of the most delicious stews and “pilaos,” flavoured with different condiments and spices, and the meat exquisitely tender and succulent, followed by sweetmeats and fruit. All ate in silence, helping themselves from time to time from such dishes as took their fancy, and as each man finished his repast he turned from the board, and a servant with ewer and basin poured water over his hands, which he rinsed and dried on a towel, and forthwith withdrew. For drink we had sherbet or plain water. The whole proceeding was simple and informal, but dignified in its restraint and quiet courtesy.

On several occasions I shot with the Kawam and with the Saulat—sometimes a big prearranged drive in the mountains, when we sat in butts and had ibex and gazelle driven past us, and sometimes informal beats for part-



ridges and hares. These latter were by far the most amusing and sporting events. The Persian does all his shooting from horseback, and practically never walks. Their horses are trained to stop when the reins are dropped on the neck, and thus the rider gets a steady shot when a bird rises and he raises his gun. Given a well-trained horse, birds rising in front or flying across are easy enough to hit with a little practice, but those coming overhead or curving behind are very difficult. Once or twice I induced my friends to walk, and they strode along gaily and shot very well; but I think they found it a poor form of sport compared with their own method.

The Persians on the whole are a very handsome race—the handsomest by far, speaking generally, of any that I have ever come across, east or west; but amongst the Persians these nomad tribesmen are pre-eminent for manly beauty (one never sees the better-class women, so I cannot pronounce upon them—practically the only unveiled women one ever sees are old hags and not very attractive-looking peasants). The Chiefs of the various tribes and sections, in especial, are exceedingly fine specimens of humanity—tall, well-built men with bold, regular features, hawk-like eyes, perfect teeth, and, as a rule, black flowing moustaches. With their dignified and independent carriage and effective style of dress, they constitute a striking and imposing group on one's first introduction to them. And they are fine horsemen and good shots.

These tribes constitute a curious and interesting survival, and it is a pity that their constant internecine quarrels and their periodical outbreaks against their own Government should have brought them so frequently into bad odour—but perhaps such bickerings are an inevitable concomitant of their martial instincts, and are necessary as an outlet for the high spirits of their young bloods, in an otherwise rather uneventful and monotonous existence.

Thus the year 1913, which had begun so badly, passed along peacefully enough. In comparison with previous years robberies and murders were few and far between; the tribesmen were at peace amongst themselves, and on good terms with the Governor-General; revenue was coming in from districts which had not paid a kran for years, and what was more, it was being fairly honestly administered on receipt; and the gendarmerie were steadily consolidating their position and asserting their influence over the main trade routes. It is true that all this was not accomplished without occasional setbacks and storms in the local teacups. The Governor-General, who, as already stated, was on the whole favourable to reform, as long as it was not carried too far or pushed on too fast, became rather alarmed at the progress of events and the growing power of Europeans in his province; and in the early summer he withdrew himself in dudgeon to a garden some miles from the town, and informed the Persian Government that until his views received adequate attention he declined to be responsible for the conduct of the administration. This "strike" lasted two or three weeks, and it required a good deal of tact and soft sawder, and many reassuring and complimentary telegrams from Tehran, to induce him to resume the reins of government. He was finally pacified and returned to the "ark" or citadel, his official residence, in the city. But from this time onwards his attitude began to change, and became one rather of suspicious vigilance than of enthusiastic co-operation with his various departments.

The only branch of the administration which had not made any satisfactory progress was the so-called "Army." It alone was without any European guidance, and it meandered along in the time-honoured paths of inefficiency and corruption. It was typical of the whole system that the Commander selected by the Governor-

General for his troops was the "Darya Begi" or "Sea-Lord"—the highest, and (to the best of my knowledge) the only naval officer in Persia. No one at Shiraz, however, appeared to regard the appointment as in the least degree anomalous or surprising, least of all the "Darya Begi" himself.

He was a stout, pleasure-loving old gentleman, with plenty of capacity when he chose to exercise it, and a past-master in all the ways of the old régime. The poor Army did not flourish under his fatherly care, and it soon became obvious that if the Governor-General insisted on having a military force to play with, it was useless to continue throwing away money on a perfectly worthless rabble, and that some form of European control or, at any rate, advisory tutelage, was essential.

The difficulty was to find a suitable man. Shiraz lay in the neutral zone as defined by our 1907 Agreement with Russia, and it was out of the question to employ either an Englishman or a Russian, whilst the Swedes were already fully occupied with their gendarmerie. Finally, the choice fell upon the only one of Mr. Shuster's staff who had remained behind in Persia after the departure of that abortive mission—one Captain Merrill, an American subject who had seen service in the U.S. gendarmerie in the Philippines, and who was now occupying a rather difficult position as an officer in the Swedish gendarmerie. After a consultation with the Governor-General, it was proposed that he should come to Shiraz to act as adviser to the Governor-General as regards the military force in the province—somewhat on the lines of the "inspecting officers" with the Imperial Service troops in the Indian States. After some hesitation, the Persian Government and the British Minister consented to the experiment being made, and in December Captain (henceforth Colonel) Merrill, accompanied by his wife, arrived at Shiraz.

He brought with him, as his assistant, a young Frenchman, Monsieur Rambeau, not more than twenty years of age, who, after completing his cadet course at St. Cyr College, had joined a cavalry regiment as a lieutenant, and almost at once had become involved with a brother officer in some affair of honour, had killed his opponent in a duel, and had fled from France to escape the disciplinary consequences. He had drifted to Tehran, where Colonel Merrill had made his acquaintance, and finding him a thoroughly capable and well-educated young officer, he brought him to Shiraz to assist in the task of reorganising the local forces.

So our motley administration was now complete. A Persian Governor-General, a Belgian Head of the Finances, Swedish officers for the gendarmerie, and an American and a Frenchman (with the help of a Persian Sea-Lord) running the Army—the whole financed by the British Government through the medium of the British Consul, who was expected to keep a general control over the expenditure of the funds and to see that they were honestly administered.

The year 1914 opened inauspiciously. A certain Nasr-ed-Diwan, who occupied a doubtful position as a semi-independent, semi-robber chieftain at Kazerun, finding that his time-honoured privileges and perquisites were being curtailed and indeed threatened with complete extinction, assumed a threatening attitude towards the gendarmerie. It was decided to bring him to book, and a small party of gendarmes, headed by one of the Swedish officers, Captain Ohlson, set out one evening to arrest Nasr-ed-Diwan in his house at Kazerun. A *mêlée* took place, in which poor Ohlson was shot dead, and the gendarmes returned to their barracks, where they were immediately attacked by Nasr-ed-Diwan, with all his own "tufangchis," and any local tribesmen and scallywags who thought fit to join in. Poor Madame Ohlson, who

had accompanied her husband to Kazerun, was in the barracks, and the small garrison had all they could do to hold their own.

As soon as the news reached Shiraz, Colonel Uggla dispatched all the reinforcements he could scrape together under two of his officers, but by this time the attacking force was so strong that, although the relieving party was able to fight its way into the barracks and to link up with its comrades, the united force was still unable to raise the siege and the garrison was in serious danger of annihilation. After consultation with the Governor-General and myself, therefore, Colonel Merrill, who was just beginning, under incredible difficulties, to get together the nucleus of his new military force, mustered his motley gathering (all mounted), and set off at their head to try and retrieve the situation. I went to see them as they paraded before departure, and it certainly was a ragged-looking band, mounted on every description of beast, and dressed in every variety of costume. But Colonel Merrill was an inspiring and gallant leader, and they went off full of courage and high spirits.

Just prior to this, however, an incident, typical of Persia, had occurred at Kazerun, which had affected the conduct of the defence. It happened that just about this time an attempt was made on the life of M. Stas, the Belgian Chief of Finance in Fars. Two shots were fired at him by persons unknown just as he was returning to his house one evening, and he was missed by a hair's-breadth. Finding that the Governor-General was rather inclined to pooh-pooh the whole matter and was taking no effective steps to trace the perpetrators of the outrage, the European heads of departments consulted together, and decided to take action on their own account.

For a variety of reasons suspicion fell upon a certain Persian notable,<sup>1</sup> a wealthy man who lived in a large

<sup>1</sup> I withhold his name for obvious reasons.

house near the city of Shiraz, and was known to be a notorious plotter and hostile to the Finance Department. Failing actual proof, we had possession of about as strong circumstantial evidence against this gentleman as was necessary to secure conviction in any court of law, and as the Governor-General refused to move, and as the matter was one which closely affected every European in Shiraz, Colonel Uggle and Colonel Merrill decided to take action themselves. A party of gendarmerie was accordingly sent to the suspect's house at night. The man was arrested and was dispatched forthwith with a small escort of gendarmerie under the immediate charge of M. Rambeau *en route* to Bushire, whence he was instructed to proceed on a pilgrimage to Kerbeleh, and on no account to return to Shiraz within a twelvemonth, under penalty of something much worse happening to him.

It was a fairly high-handed proceeding, but perhaps justified in the circumstances of the case (which I have only sketched roughly here). Anyway, Rambeau and his prisoner and a small escort started off in the early hours of the morning on the Bushire road—the prisoner riding on a mule with his feet tied together with a rope underneath, and Rambeau at his elbow with a revolver very handy. They proceeded unmolested on their way until near Kazerun, where, in the interval, hostilities had developed. Rambeau, however, being a regular little fire-eater, was no whit disturbed by this unexpected development. Still carefully guarding his prisoner, he fought his way with his small band through the enemy's outpost line and reached the barracks at a critical moment in time to join in the defence. His small but welcome reinforcement, and his own pluck and military skill (he loved and had carefully studied all that related to his profession), undoubtedly helped to put heart into the gendarmerie and to stiffen their resistance.

The subsequent arrival of Colonel Merrill and his

gallant band put an end to the affair. Nasr-ed-Diwan fled and his ragamuffins scattered. There was some looting in the town by the gendarmerie and the other miscellaneous elements, but it was put a stop to with a firm hand by the Swedish officers and Merrill; and the gendarmerie henceforward (until the whole situation was again thrown into the melting-pot during the war) maintained law and order at Kazerun, and indeed on the whole Shiraz-Bushire road.

It only remains to add that as soon as the siege was over, Rambeau conducted his prisoner to Bushire, whence he duly took ship to Basra, and returned a year later to Shiraz, a much chastened individual and, no doubt, greatly benefited in a spiritual sense by his pilgrimage to the Holy Places in Mesopotamia.

All this, no doubt, is very small beer (especially in view of all that has happened since), and I only record it as an example of the really extraordinary state of affairs prevailing at that time in Southern Persia, and of the curious duties and responsibilities which fell to the lot of a British Consul, who, as the holder of the purse-strings, virtually controlled the situation, and had to co-operate with so many diverse authorities, and to try and co-ordinate and reconcile so many conflicting interests.

Our well-meant experiment in the direction of military reform did not last long. The forces of reaction, headed by the Governor-General, shortly proved too strong for poor Merrill. He found himself hampered and thwarted at every turn; funds gave out, and after a long-drawn-out struggle against overwhelming odds, he succumbed to the inevitable and returned to Tehran, and with a sigh of relief the Army, and all the harpies who batten upon it, sank back into their accustomed slough.

## CHAPTER XI

### SOUTH PERSIA IN THE GREAT WAR

(1914-1916)

THIS rapid sketch of the course of events in Fars during the year 1913, and the early months of 1914, will give a general idea of the situation prevailing in South Persia, and *mutatis mutandis* all over Persia, at the beginning of the Great War. But quite apart from the more obvious difficulties of the position, due to unruly tribesmen and inefficient and corrupt officials, there were other even more serious subterranean factors which had not as yet displayed themselves in the light of day, and which were to prove even more deadly to the reconstruction of poor Persia under her new and already tottering form of government. British and Russian rivalry had been in the past an almost fatal obstacle to any real progress, and the cause of innumerable misunderstandings and failures; and it was only under the provisions of the 1907 Convention that it had been found possible to ensure some co-operation between the two Powers, and a genuine attempt to assist Persia in maintaining her integrity and independence.

Of these efforts the new gendarmerie, under Swedish officers, constituted the prop and mainstay. Both Russia and England, and their respective representatives in Persia, had given, and were giving, wholehearted support to the Swedes in their difficult task, and on the whole satisfactory progress was being made. In nearly every



province of Persia the gendarmerie were establishing themselves more and more firmly, and the results of their régime were becoming more plainly evident; and it can scarcely be doubted that had they had a clear field for their endeavours the new policy would in course of time have justified itself by its results, and would have secured a more or less stable administration and the restoration and maintenance of order throughout the country.

But all these hopes and well-meant efforts were destined to disappointment and failure. There was one fatal flaw underlying the whole of the gendarmerie system, and that, in a word, was the fact that the Swedish officers were almost without exception pro-German and anti-Russian. This statement is made without any intention or desire to blame, or even to criticise, such sentiments. They represented the effects of two perfectly natural causes. Fear and hatred of Russia in Sweden were due to well-known geographical and historical considerations, and all that can be said about it now is that it was a pity that this fact was not more fully appreciated by the two great Powers concerned when the question of the employment of foreign officers in Persia was under consideration.

And secondly, the Swedish military officers, the majority of whom had undergone courses, or attended manœuvres, etc., in Germany, were one and all, and very rightly and naturally, imbued with the highest admiration for the German Army and the German military system generally; and were in several instances, which came under my observation, incapable of conceiving the defeat of Germany by any European Power, or even by any combination of Powers. This pro-Germanism, in fact, was based on genuine admiration and respect, and also perhaps in certain cases on similarities of temperament and character.

It is easy to see now, after the event, how dangerous and double-edged a tool was the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. It was a measure of expediency which met the need of the moment effectively enough, and relieved the North-West Frontier of India from a chronic menace; and certainly in Persia, as I saw for myself, it immensely facilitated the relations between the British and Russian representatives, and gave to the British, at any rate, a chance of encouraging some constructive work in their own "sphere of influence," and even (as in Fars) in the "neutral sphere" as well. But this rapprochement with Czarist Russia, in spite of certain surface advantages, did us infinite moral damage in other respects, especially among the peoples of the Near and Middle East. It was certainly one of the factors which influenced the Turks to throw in their lot against us in the Great War; and the Persians never forgave us for what they regarded as a perfidious attempt to dismember their country with the help of their arch enemy and secular "bug-bear." But these sentiments were never translated into actual hostility, and even with the stimulus of German intrigues might never have reached such a pitch of intensity, had it not been for the unfortunate presence in Persia of a number of foreign officers in positions of authority, who shared to the full the Persians' hatred and distrust of Russia, and who were at the same time ardent admirers of Germany.

Needless to say, the German agents in Persia were not slow to perceive and to avail themselves of such an unexpected and heaven-sent opportunity. For several years before the war, besides the activities of the official representatives in Persia, a series of "scientific" and "commercial" German travellers and agents had traversed the whole country, and had made themselves acquainted with every phase of national life, and had entered into relations, more or less friendly and confidential,

with practically every personage and group of any importance.

Naturally, in the course of these proceedings the Swedish officers of the gendarmerie were not left out of account, and the German Legation at Tehran had made itself thoroughly acquainted with their characters and proclivities. During the summer of 1913 the Commandant of the gendarmerie, Colonel Hjalmarsen, had travelled through Persia from Tehran to Bushire inspecting the gendarmerie posts and acquainting himself with the local and provincial politics and personages as he passed; and it was noteworthy that he was accompanied on this tour by the Military Attaché from the German Legation. I happened to be absent from Shiraz when the Commandant arrived, as I had been away with a gendarmerie column watching them rout out a nest of brigands in the neighbourhood of Kazerun, but we met on the road as I was returning to Shiraz—Colonel Hjalmarsen riding at the head of his escort with the German Military Attaché at his side. We stopped and chatted amicably and continued on our respective routes, but even then it was a significant portent which gave me something to think about, and was only one of many similar indications of Germany's activities, not only in Persia, but in every country where British interests were concerned.

Another very active agent in preparing the ground for what was to follow in South Persia was the German Consul in Bushire, the famous Herr Wassmuss, who gave us so much trouble during the war, and who was the direct cause of the subsequent arrest of the British community at Shiraz and their imprisonment by the rebellious tribesmen of the littoral. Wassmuss came on a visit to Shiraz during the summer of 1913, and during the two or three months that he spent there he was unceasingly active, and travelled extensively through the

inland districts of Fars, making friends with the Ilkhanis of the nomad tribes, and with village headmen, etc., whilst entering into very intimate relations with the Governor-General and the Swedish officers. He was a blond, manly-looking Saxon of agreeable manners and genial character, and I saw a good deal of him, and we exchanged hospitalities, and even made some short shooting trips together. It was, of course, perfectly obvious that he was acquiring information and intriguing with the Ilkhanis and others under instructions from his own Government; but the prospect of German penetration into inland Persia (except perhaps of a commercial nature) seemed at that time so unlikely that, beyond keeping a watch on his movements and reporting them to the Minister, we did not take him very seriously, and our personal relations were of the friendliest.

By midsummer 1914 I had been for eighteen months Consul at Shiraz, and had had time and opportunity to formulate some opinions regarding the administration of the province and existing conditions, and some more general conclusions as to the permanent problems affecting South Persia as a whole and the province of Fars in particular. Before submitting formal proposals on these subjects to the Minister, it seemed advisable to discuss the whole question with him personally, and I applied for and obtained permission to visit Tehran. Owing to the establishment of gendarmerie posts over the whole length of the Shiraz-Tehran road, the state of the country was immensely better than it had been when I travelled to Shiraz in the winter of 1912, and I was able to dispense with any escort, and to ride or drive, accompanied only by a single Persian servant. At Kum, about ninety miles from Tehran, I was met by my friend Monsieur Le Comte, the French Minister at Tehran, who had spent a month with me at Shiraz during the summer, and he drove me into Tehran in his new motor-car—an un-

speokable relief after plodding along for days in a rickety Persian phaeton, drawn by a pair of more or less decrepit horses.

There were two principal matters which I had to discuss with the Minister, Sir Walter Townley: first, our relations with the Ilkhanis of the two great nomad tribes of Fars. The preceding chapter will have made it clear that practically the whole problem of South Persia centred round these two tribal groups. Numbering each several thousand well-armed, active men, the majority mounted, they straggled across the whole surface of the province of Fars, covering in their yearly migrations very large areas, and crossing the main trade routes in various places. Although they acknowledged the nominal sovereignty of the Shah (they could never be brought to accept seriously the idea of a constitutional form of government), and were loud in their protestations of patriotism, they were actually a law unto themselves; and as we have seen, there were times when the whole province was convulsed for months at a time, and the trade routes rendered practically impassable, by their internecine feuds and rivalries, and the inability of their titular chiefs to control their predatory instincts. The Governor-General was quite powerless to exercise any control over them, and the best he could do was to try and arrange some balance of power by playing off one tribe or section against another, and, in the case of the Kashkais, by intriguing with the various candidates for the Ilkhaniship.

On first arrival at Shiraz I was inclined to adopt the strict governmental standpoint, and to believe that the solution of the problem lay in the organisation of a gendarmerie for the maintenance of order on the main trade routes, and the creation of a reliable military force, to garrison the capital and important district centres, thus strengthening the Governor-General's hands, and enabling

him to control the tribesmen by force of arms when necessary. But as time went on it became evident that any Governor-General must necessarily be a man of straw, here to-day and gone to-morrow, a puppet of the innumerable kaleidoscopic Cabinets which perpetually formed and dissolved themselves at Tehran. All he could do was to try and maintain some kind of precarious balance as between the rival sections and individuals, and to pray that his term of office might finish without actual tribal warfare or serious loss of European life or property.

These considerations became more and more apparent as time went on. The gendarmerie, it is true, were promising well, and were maintaining order on the main roads. But elsewhere in the province the tribesmen were as powerful and as independent as ever; and with the failure of our well-meant efforts to create a serviceable military force, it was clear that they were, and would remain, the dominant factor in the situation. They were, in fact, the permanent repository of power in Fars as contrasted with the transitory authority of the Governors-General.

In the interests of order and good administration, therefore, and without in any way infringing upon or derogating from the authority of the Governor-General, or of the Persian Government, it seemed desirable to endeavour to secure the co-operation of the Ilkhanis of the two principal tribal groups in the work of rescuing Southern Persia from chaos. Sir Walter Townley cordially approved of the proposal, and he authorised me to discuss the question informally with the two Ilkhanis, and to ascertain whether it might not be possible to induce them to enter into some agreement binding themselves to keep the peace with one another, to maintain order amongst their tribesmen, to pay their local revenue to the Persian Government, and in general to support, instead of continually undermining, the administration of

the province. H.M. Government were spending a very considerable sum of money in the endeavour to restore order in Fars, and it was all to their interests, as well as those of the Persian Government, that the Ilkhanis should be brought to realise and accept certain responsibilities. In pursuance of this policy, and with the approval of H.M. Government, the Minister entrusted me with two formal letters addressed to the two Ilkhanis outlining the Minister's views, and requesting the co-operation of the Ilkhanis in the task of maintaining order and supporting the administration in Fars; and I was authorised to discuss the whole question with them, and to ascertain their opinions and to what extent they could be relied on to co-operate.

The second matter which required consideration was that of the allocation of the revenues of Fars, which included the subvention from H.M. Government, amongst the different branches of the administration. Certain flagrant abuses existed in this respect which it was impossible to rectify locally, and with the Minister's permission I went into the question in detail with M. Mornard, the Treasurer-General. M. Mornard at once took the matter up, and shortly afterwards issued instructions to his Shiraz subordinate, M. Stas, which immediately produced a marked change for the better. It is unnecessary to say anything further regarding this long dead and forgotten question, and I merely allude to it here as another instance of the peculiar position occupied by a British Consul to Persia at that time, and the extent to which Great Britain was interested in the internal situation.

During my stay at Tehran, I purchased a second-hand Ford car which was for sale at Baku, and had it sent across the Black Sea to Enzeli and driven up to Tehran by a mechanic (who unfortunately ran into and killed a little Persian girl *en route*), and I drove this car down

to Shiraz. It was fairly plain sailing as far as Isfahan, but from this on I encountered some rather awkward places—sand, nullahs, etc., and a steep rocky hill just outside Shiraz. But even so it was an immense improvement on the dreadful old Persian carriage, and there were many miles of gently undulating plateau with a hard smooth surface, where one could drive the car as fast as it could go. I had sent word on ahead to the two Ilkhanis, who were at the summer headquarters of their respective tribes, that I had a message for them from the British Minister, and they both met me in turn on the road. I found them both much interested in what I had to tell them, and they both professed themselves as willing and anxious to co-operate for the good of their country on the lines suggested. We discussed the whole question very frankly in full detail, and I prepared the outline of an informal agreement which should constitute the basis for a constructive policy in Fars in exchange for the haphazard intrigues of the past. The outbreak of the Great War, however, which occurred at this very moment, threw the whole question again into the melting-pot, and was the beginning of all the tragic occurrences of the next few years.

The first few months of the war passed tranquilly enough. There was anxiety, of course, and the attitude of some of the Swedish gendarmerie officers was rather ambiguous, but on the whole matters proceeded much as usual, and there was nothing to indicate that such a storm was brewing. But in the early months of 1915 evidence began to accumulate to show that Germany was elaborating a serious plan of campaign directed against British interests in Persia, and designed eventually to include Afghanistan in its scope. The stormy petrel of these schemes in the South of Persia was our old friend Wassmuss. News reached us in February that he had been appointed by his Government as head of a mission which



was to enter Persian territory from Mesopotamia, and to pass through the southern provinces carrying on a vigorous anti-British propaganda, and distributing arms and money in suitable quarters, with Afghanistan as his ultimate objective; and about the same time a new German Consul appeared in Shiraz, and the behaviour of certain of the Swedes and of the Governor-General became gradually more enigmatic and disquieting. It unfortunately happened that just prior to this my friend, Colonel Ugglä, a most loyal and capable officer, who had been in command of the Shiraz gendarmerie for about a year, took leave and returned to Sweden, and was succeeded by another officer who was pronouncedly pro-German, and who from the first became a tool in the hands of the pro-German Persian officers of the gendarmerie, and of the German Agents themselves; and some of the younger Swedish officers on the spot followed his lead.

The first overt act which heralded the coming storm was the arrest of Herr Wassmuss with his caravan of incendiary mischief-makers by some tribesmen friendly to the British off the coast of the Gulf, as they were making their way eastwards from Behbahan. The tribesmen surrounded the caravan and sent word to Bushire of its capture. But whilst awaiting assistance and instructions from there, Wassmuss, who was a very active and daring man, slipped out under the fly of his tent during the night, and made his way, half-clothed, across some twenty odd miles of trackless country to Borazjun, where he threw himself on the protection of the Khan, Gazanfur-es-Saltaneh—a truculent individual who had for long been at loggerheads with the Persian Government, and with the British authorities at Bushire. The rest of the caravan—personnel, arms, money, propagandist literature, etc.—was taken to Bushire by sea, and this was the last heard of them; but Wassmuss, the

most active and dangerous of them all, remained at large, to make such mischief as he could.

It is interesting to note here that amongst the contents of the baggage captured on this occasion was found a secret German diplomatic code which was used to communicate with the German Embassy in the U.S. before America came into the war. There was some controversy as to where this code had been found, and through what agency it had been discovered, and the matter was set at rest by Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, in an interview with the "Daily Express" Correspondent, during which Sir Reginald says (see "Daily Express" of the 24th January, 1930):

"The diplomatic cipher referred to . . . was actually found by me in England. . . . It fell into the hands of the British, who captured the camp and baggage of a marauding party in South Persia. The German official, in whose possession the cipher was, is stated to have escaped in his pyjamas, leaving the valuable document behind.

"The code was found by me—at the India Office—when the baggage was searched."

Wassmuss speedily ingratiated himself with a lawless and rebellious group of tribal chieftains who inhabited that part of the hinterland and littoral of the Persian Gulf, namely, Gazanfur-es-Saltaneh, the Khan of Borazjun (already mentioned), Sheikh Hussain of Ahmadi, and Zair Khidhar of Ahram. These three worthies were simply petty chieftains, or rather village headmen, exercising jurisdiction over a few square miles of country, and supported by two or three hundred ragged "tufangchis" (riflemen). They none of them possessed any intrinsic importance or influence, but they constituted a standing example of the disorderly condition of South Persia at that time, and they were indeed just the sort of

gentry that the gendarmerie were intended eventually to suppress. As it was, they were a law unto themselves. Ahmadi and Borazjun are situated on the main trade road between Bushire and Shiraz, and this fact gave to the Khans of these two places special opportunities for rendering themselves obnoxious. For years past they had abused their position and hampered trade by levying illegal taxes on all caravans of merchandise passing through their territory, and neither the orders of the Persian Government nor the protests of the British representative had been effective in restraining them. The gendarmerie, even had they been inspired by the best intentions, were not as yet strong enough to tackle this end of the road; and at the time when these events were taking place, their loyalty to the Persian Government was becoming every day more doubtful, and it was more and more evident that they were playing into the hands of Germany.

No better *milieu* could have been devised for the furtherance of the German programme, and Wassmuss, furious as he was at the failure of his own scheme and the loss of his companions and sinews of war, became at once the centre of all the anti-British and pro-German elements. After a few days spent amongst the Tangistani<sup>1</sup> Khans, he came up to Shiraz, moving about quite freely and safely under the protection of the gendarmerie and other anti-British elements, and settled down with the newly arrived German Consul.

Naturally, from this time on the whole atmosphere at Shiraz changed. Fars, as shown in the preceding chapter, had not been exactly a bed of roses for some years past, but such disturbances as had occurred had amounted really to nothing more than domestic quarrels among the people of the country, which, however troublesome and

<sup>1</sup> This part of the littoral of the Persian Gulf is known as "Tangistan."

sometimes dangerous, possessed no serious significance as far as foreign subjects were concerned, and which generally subsided as quickly as they arose. The whole thing, in fact, partook rather of the nature of *opéra bouffe*, and was regarded much as are the antics of naughty (but unfortunately well-armed) children.

But the possibilities of really serious mischief were now inherent in the situation, and from this time on they were skilfully exploited by the German agents and their Swedish and Persian sympathisers. A vigorous anti-British campaign was inaugurated, and every effort made to poison the minds of the local people against us. Two or three scurrilous rags, financed entirely by German money, and devoted solely to abuse of the Allies, made their appearance, and certain Mullahs were suborned to preach against us in the mosques.

This campaign had powerful local backing. First the Governor-General of Fars, the Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh, whilst preserving an outward appearance of neutrality, had now given free scope to his pro-German proclivities. He had for some time been carrying on a subterranean campaign amongst the townsmen. Our sources of information showed us that, under the guise of a "democratic" party, he had been busily perfecting an elaborate organisation, very much on the lines of the Secret Societies which prepared the way for the Turkish Revolution. A Central Committee, of which he himself was the leading spirit, controlled a Society of several hundred members through the medium of various sub-committees, each in charge of a separate Lodge or Group. The majority of the members were totally ignorant of the purpose for which they were enrolled, and were encouraged with vague talk about patriotism, and were indoctrinated with a gradually increasing hostility towards England and Russia; and at first little was said about Germany. But there is no doubt that the Governor-

General was working with definite ends in view, and that he intended the organisation as a whole to furnish him with a control of public opinion at Shiraz, and to supply a backing of actual material force when the right moment came for setting the machinery in motion. And besides this, he was in constant confidential communication, both with the Swedish officers of the gendarmerie and with the German Consul and Wassmuss.

The Swedish officers, too, as already shown, were quite ready to support the German campaign, and the bulk of their Persian officers belonged to the Governor-General's so-called "democratic" party.

But in spite of all this the great bulk of the population remained perfectly apathetic, and displayed not the smallest interest either in pro-Germanism or any other foreign matter; and after a few days, Wassmuss, finding that the moment was not yet ripe for more overt action, returned to his friends the Tangistanis, and busied himself in working them up to the commitment of some outrage. The effects of his activities were soon apparent, and in July the tribesmen attacked Bushire. They were driven off with considerable loss, whilst two young officers were killed on our side. This outrage (occurring, as must be remembered, in a professedly neutral country) compelled the Indian Government to take steps to protect its interests, and early in August a small British force landed and occupied Bushire, and the Persian flag was replaced by the British flag, pending the appointment by the Persian Government of a suitable Governor, capable of maintaining order and restraining the rebellious tribesmen.

From this time on the situation at Shiraz (and also at Isfahan farther north) developed with ominous rapidity. Our action at Bushire was, of course, misrepresented by our enemies as a blow against the integrity of Persia, and a violent agitation was worked up against us. The local

rags redoubled their scurrility. The suborned Mullahs thundered against the British in their mosques, and bands of small boys paraded the streets, beating their breasts and loudly lamenting the woes of Persia and the malevolence of the British; and there were many other symptoms that serious mischief was intended. From my various sources of information I learned that the German Consul had engaged certain bad characters to assassinate British subjects, and I daily received threatening letters.

In the circumstances the best course seemed to be to throw the onus of our protection on the gendarmerie, who owed their existence to British support and subsidies, and whose duty it was to preserve order; so I informed their Commandant that I held him responsible for any outrage that might be perpetrated against British subjects in Shiraz, and called upon him to take the necessary steps to secure our safety. This placed him in rather a quandary. As already stated, he was a man of inferior type and station, and whatever may have been his motives or interests, at any rate he was whole-heartedly pro-German, and was playing the German game. He could not, however, very well refuse my request without openly committing himself, so from this time forth a small mounted escort of gendarmes accompanied me and my Vice-Consul whenever we moved about outside the Consulate, and a few guards were also sent to protect the Bank and the Telegraph Office and their British staffs against possible outrage.

A few words here about my Vice-Consul. Owing to increased pressure of work, and the need of some intermediary between myself and the Persians, I applied in the spring of 1915 for permission to appoint as my Vice-Consul a certain Ghulam Ali Khan, a local Muhammadan gentleman of the Nawab family, originally of Indian extraction, but which had been settled in Fars for some generations. (Readers of the late Prof. Browne's delight-

ful book, "A Year in Persia," will recollect his references to the Nawab family, whose guest he was during his sojourn at Shiraz.) The members of this family at Shiraz, although quite Persianised in manner, customs, and language, still retained their British nationality, and were loyal subjects and friends. The elder brother, Hussain Ali Khan Nawab, had at one time been the British Agent in Fars, but he was now getting on in years and in poor health, so I requested his younger brother, Ghulam Ali Khan, to accept the dangerous and thankless office of British Vice-Consul at a critical moment. Ghulam Ali Khan was at this time a man about forty years of age—a stout and genial person—who had been educated in England as a boy and spoke English perfectly. He fully realised the risk he was incurring by identifying himself officially with the British Consulate, but he accepted my proposal, and placed his services at my disposition, and the appointment was approved and ratified by H.M. Minister at Tehran and by the Foreign Office.

As stated above, the agitation against us in the city of Shiraz was being very vigorously worked up by the German agents and their friends, but as far as it was possible to judge, it had not spread much, if at all, into the rural districts or among the nomad tribes. I called one day on the Kawam at his town house, and had a talk over the situation. I found him very perturbed. He disliked the Germans and their propaganda, which he foresaw must in the long run prove injurious to Persia, and he assured me of his staunch friendship for the British; but he said that it was difficult for him to take any effective action. His tribesmen were not sufficiently well armed or organised to exercise any control over the gendarmerie, and so, whilst he would do his best to keep his tribesmen quiet and friendly to us, he could do little or nothing to influence the course of events in Shiraz itself.

It was at Isfahan, early in September, that the first serious outrage took place. Mr. George Grahame, the Consul-General, was returning from his morning ride, when he was ambushed and shot at. He escaped unhurt himself, but one of his Indian cavalry escort was shot dead, and shortly afterwards he and the whole of the British community left Isfahan, and retired *viâ* Shuster to the Persian Gulf.

On the morning of the 7th September my Vice-Consul, Ghulam Ali Khan, was riding into the Consulate with two gendarmes as escort riding close behind, when he was shot in the back, and carried in a dying state into the Consulate with a bullet in his stomach. He lingered all that day, and died during the night. I felt his death keenly. I knew that he incurred a serious risk when he accepted the post, and he himself was convinced that he was doomed to certain death from that moment. He worked loyally and well during the few weeks he acted as Vice-Consul, and he lived and died bravely in the execution of his duty in very difficult and unnerving circumstances. I, of course, made representations and protests to the Governor-General and to the officer commanding the gendarmerie, and demanded the apprehension and punishment of the murderer; and Sir Charles Marling (who had now succeeded Sir Walter Townley at Tehran) endeavoured to impress upon the Persian Government the necessity for taking strong action of some kind to put a stop once and for all to such outrages on foreign subjects in a reputedly neutral country. All concerned made facile expressions of regret, but nothing was done to rectify matters or to punish the guilty; but the Mukhbir-es-Saltaneh was finally recalled and replaced temporarily by the Kawam-ul-Mulk as Governor-General.

The Kawam immediately marched into Shiraz with a considerable following of his tribesmen and took over the reins of office. His position, however, was not a very



secure one. The gendarmerie constituted by far the strongest and best-armed force in the city and held all the strategic points; and the ill-armed and ill-organised Arabs would have had no chance against them in the event of a fight. The Kawam realised this, and played his cards as best he could without bringing matters to an issue. He called together the leading inhabitants and the chief Mullahs, and urged them to do all in their power to keep the people quiet and to prevent outrages against foreigners; and he sent a small escort of his tribesmen to occupy a garden adjoining the Consulate.

For a few days the situation improved, and the agitation against us diminished, but the state of affairs at Bushire was a constant irritant, and was cleverly used by the Germans to excite popular feeling. About the middle of October a further outrage took place. My Persian head clerk and one of the Consulate "Ghulams" (mounted messengers) were attacked one evening in the city. The Mirza received a bullet-wound in the arm, and the Ghulam was shot through the body and died in a few hours. As before, no arrests were made, and, although the Kawam did his best to discover the culprits, he received no support from the gendarmerie and police, and no one was ever brought to book. As may be imagined, the unfortunate Persians in British employment (whether with the Consulate, the Bank, or the Telegraph Department) were in a state of terror, and expected every moment to be assassinated, and it speaks well for their courage and loyalty that they stuck to us at all.

During these trying months I took several opportunities of talking seriously to the Swedish officers of the gendarmerie regarding their share in, and responsibility for, the state of affairs in Fars. Their connivance in German schemes had now become so open, not only in the city of Shiraz, but elsewhere along the road, that it was notorious all over the province; and although they

made half-hearted denials when taxed, they could give no satisfactory explanation for their attitude. More than once I begged the Commandant, and the younger officers, to remember that they were officers of a neutral country, serving in a neutral country, whose duty it was to maintain law and order to the best of their ability with the force under their command, and not to meddle in any way with political intrigues, or to identify themselves with any political, or, especially, with any foreign party. The funds which had enabled them to establish and equip their gendarmerie in Fars had been supplied almost entirely by the British Government, which had, in other respects, assisted and supported them from the start at a time when nearly every native element in the province was hostile to them, and whose only object was the restoration and maintenance of order and the safety of the roads; and all the Swedish officers were asked to do was to carry out this programme in accordance with the orders and wishes of the Persian Government, whose servants they were temporarily. And I pointed out that the course they were then pursuing was dishonourable to themselves personally, and would reflect upon their native country.

But they were too deeply involved in the German web for such representations to have any effect upon them, and they were also supported and egged on by certain of the Persian gendarmerie officers, all northerners, who were members of the Governor-General's so-called "democratic" party. The murder of the Vice-Consul, whilst actually escorted by gendarmes, was something of a shock to them, especially as Ghulam Ali Khan was a cheery, hospitable soul who had always lived on pleasant social terms with the Swedes, played polo with us all, etc.; but they professed their inability to ascertain who had fired the fatal shot, and nothing was done to pursue the matter.

It was clear, in fact, that the German faction had deter-

mined to rid Fars of the British, just as they had succeeded in doing at Isfahan, and that they would stick at nothing to gain their end. The new Governor-General was friendly and sympathetic, but he was powerless in the face of a well-armed force controlled by Europeans, and in any case he could not foresee and prevent assassination.

The climax of our little drama was, in fact, rapidly approaching. The next chapter will describe the actual denouement.

## CHAPTER XII

### PRISONER IN PERSIA

(1915-1916)

ABOUT 9.30 a.m. on the 10th November, 1915, I was sitting writing in my little office in the Consulate, when one of the Indian Sawars came running up to say that parties of the gendarmerie, armed with rifles and machine guns, had occupied the roofs of the houses opposite the Consulate gateway, and had directed their machine guns at the Consulate, and that another party with a field gun had taken up its position in the road facing the main gateway, and had trained the gun on to the gateway.

I at once sent word to Mr. J. C. Smith, the officer in charge of the Indo-European Telegraph Department at Shiraz, whose office was in the adjoining garden, requesting him to try and get an urgent message through to the British Minister at Tehran before the wires were cut; but my messenger was crossed by one from him to say that all the wires to the north had been interrupted a few minutes earlier; and on attempting to telephone to the Governor-General I found that the telephone wires also had been tampered with.

A single gendarme, carrying a white flag, then made his appearance at the Consulate gate, and was brought to me, and handed me a letter written in French (a copy of which will be found in Appendix A), of which the following is a translation:

*"Wednesday, 10th November, 1915.*

"MONSIEUR LE CONSUL,—

"The undersigned Committee has the honour to inform you:

"The provisional arrest of yourself and of the English Colony has been decided on by the Persian patriots. Half an hour to count from the delivery of this letter is granted you to take your decision. If you render yourself as prisoner with the Colony you will be sent to Borazjun, and will be kept there to be exchanged against the Persians and Germans who have been made prisoners by your compatriots on neutral Persian territory. As to the women, they can, as they desire, remain in all security at Shiraz or accompany you to Borazjun, where they will be immediately sent under escort to Bushire. The personal and private property here will be sealed and guarded, as also the Consulate.

"If after thirty minutes—you will be so good as to sign the hour and the minute of the arrival of this letter on the envelope—you do not surrender, the English Consulate and the English houses will be bombarded, and the Committee expressly declines the responsibility for all the consequences which might result from your refusal for your subjects and especially for the women.

"As soon as you shall have constituted yourselves prisoners your houses will be occupied, and you will be accorded three hours to prepare for your departure. Three mules for each European, man or woman, are held at your disposal. Each of you can be accompanied by one servant.

"We add that the telegraphic installation must be handed over to us intact, failing which we shall hold the Director, Mr. Smith, personally responsible.

"THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION  
OF PERSIAN INDEPENDENCE."

This was a nice little bombshell, but I was not in the least surprised. I had been expecting something of the kind for weeks past. In the circumstances there was nothing to be done but to accept their terms. The garrison of the Consulate consisted of ten Indian troopers (the Kawam's Arabs could not be relied on for serious fighting, and anyway, they would not have taken action without explicit orders from the Kawam himself), and the place was not adapted for defence, consisting as it did of a garden surrounded by high walls without loopholes or parapets. But even supposing we had been in a position to defend the Consulate itself, the rest of the small community were scattered here and there (the Imperial Bank manager, Mr. Ferguson, and his family about a mile away), and would have been left at the mercy of the revolutionaries. After consultation with Mr. Smith, therefore, I wrote a reply accepting the terms of the ultimatum, under protest.

The next half-hour (it was actually only twenty minutes) I spent in destroying confidential books, papers, etc. I had already, in anticipation of some such event, destroyed my various cipher-code books, except one. This also, with a heap of other confidential documents, I carried into the garden, poured kerosene over them, and set them alight, and left a man to keep stirring up the mass with a stick to make it burn quicker. In view of the possibility of having to clear out of Shiraz with the rest of the British Colony, as had been done at Isfahan, I had accumulated from the Government funds at my disposal a nest-egg of £2,000 in gold—mostly English, with a few Turkish sovereigns, which I had purchased locally with the help of the Imperial Bank and other friends. This money I took immediate steps to dispose of, and one of the first things I did after my release from imprisonment the following August was to tele-

graph its whereabouts to the British Minister at Tehran, and it was safely recovered.

These preparations, together with final directions to my Persian servants, etc., occupied our allotted interval, and some twenty minutes after the delivery of the ultimatum, a Persian gendarmerie officer, with a small escort, appeared at the gate and marched up to the Consulate, and informed me courteously that I was under arrest, and that he was now in charge of the Consulate and all it contained, and he requested me to prepare for an immediate journey.

From this moment (10 a.m. on the 10th November, 1915) until I rode out of the rebel Khan's village on the 20th August of the following year, I was a prisoner and under constant supervision.

I went to my bedroom to pack a suitcase and to change into riding clothes (watched all the time by an armed gendarme), and when I came out I found that the gendarmes had carried the heavy steel safe out of my office, and were preparing to lift it on to a bullock-cart. I asked them why they were taking it away, and they said they were sending it to their headquarters to have it forced open. "But," I replied, "I have the keys here, and it will be much simpler and easier to unlock it."

For months the most fantastic stories regarding the accumulation of specie (and of munitions of war) in the Consulate had been current in Shiraz, and all gathered round in expectation of seeing these hordes of wealth revealed. I opened the safe, which was, of course, empty, with the exception of one or two Toman notes of small value and some worthless papers. It was a great disappointment to the Protectors of Persian Independence, and the subsequent frenzied search through the house and garden (which I was told later was all dug up) failed to reveal either treasure or arms.

Although the ultimatum had promised us three hours

to prepare for our departure, orders arrived from the gendarmerie headquarters that we were to be hurried out at once, so as soon as I had changed my clothes and packed my suitcase I was told to mount my horse, which had meantime been saddled, and accompanied by the ten Indian Sawars and two of my Persian servants, I rode out of the Consulate under a strong escort of gendarmes. The roofs of the adjoining houses were still occupied by their pickets, armed with rifles and machine guns, and I saw up the road one of the two Armstrong guns, which I had ordered for them from England some months before and paid for with money provided by the British Government, trained on to the Consulate gateway.

The gendarmerie officers, under the advice and supervision of the German Consul, had made their preparations for the coup thoroughly and carefully. The main roads leading from the city and all principal points were guarded, and the people had been told to keep to their houses. There were, therefore, no crowds—just a few scattered groups of town and country folk here and there. The Consulate lies about half a mile from the city, and we passed several gendarme posts as we rode along, who shouted as we passed (evidently under instructions):

“Down with England! Long live Persia!”

We heard afterwards that the gendarmerie had put a cordon round their barracks and the neighbourhood of the Consulate, and had occupied other strategic points so as to prevent any attempts at interference or rescue on the part of the Kawam; and these arrangements, together with the speed and secrecy with which the plot was carried out, secured the complete success of what must be acknowledged as a very well-organised coup.

We rode straight into the city through one of the main gateways to the gendarmerie barracks, where Mr.



Ferguson, the manager of the Imperial Bank of Persia, with his wife and two daughters, had already been brought, and the rest of the small English community were brought in during the course of the next half-hour, and also several of the Armenian signallers employed in the Indo-European Telegraph Department. This is a convenient opportunity to enumerate our little party.

*The staff of the Imperial Bank of Persia:*

Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson.

Miss Ferguson, aged 17.

Miss Peggy Ferguson, aged 8.

Mr. Ayrton.

Mr. Misso (a Ceylonese British subject).

*The staff of the Indo-European Telegraph Department:*

Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

Mr. Pettigrew (who had broken his leg in an accident some days before and was still in splints).

And also Mr. L. Livingstone (a young business man of the firm of Livingstone & Zeytoon).

And myself.

Eleven persons (seven men and four ladies) in all, not counting the Armenians, Mr. Zeytoon (Mr. Livingstone's partner), Mr. Mackertich, and two or three others of the Telegraph Department staff. I may anticipate here by saying that poor Mackertich, a most inoffensive person and a loyal and hardworking employé of the I.E.T.D., but who had incurred the enmity of the gendarmerie whilst stationed at Kazerun, was deliberately murdered in cold blood without any semblance of trial or excuse a day or two later. The other Armenians were liberated and sent to Bushire.

The conspirators' one idea now was to get us away from Shiraz as quickly as possible, before news of our arrest should reach the Kawam or any others of our tribal friends who might be tempted to try and rescue us.

So within an hour of our reaching the barracks we were hustled off again—the men, including the Indian Sawars, on horseback, and the ladies in a carriage. We were not told our destination, but found that our route lay along the southern road leading to Bushire. As we passed the Consulate I saw that the Persian flag was flying on the flag-staff, and a machine-gun had been installed over the gateway. A few miles out we were passed by a band of mounted ruffians riding full tilt towards Shiraz under command of a well-known local brigand, one Ali Akhbar Khurdil (the “Heart-Eater”) by name, with whom I was well acquainted, and who yelled at us in derision as he galloped past.

We reached the first stage of the journey, some eight miles from Shiraz, about 4.30 p.m. It is a stone caravan-serai of the usual Persian pattern, and we were huddled together in a small upper room, closely guarded by our gendarme escort.

We were all a good deal preoccupied about our kit. The bank staff had been arrested and rushed off without any warning or time to make any preparations whatever; but their servants packed some things and sent them after us, and by nightfall a few mules with odds and ends had turned up. I had a suitcase, and most of the others a box or two, but Livingstone and Ayrton had literally nothing except what they stood up in. My faithful Tehrani servant, Musayib, who had been with me everywhere in my Persian wanderings since I first arrived in the country six years before, accompanied us, and two or three syces, or grooms.

We managed to get some tea and to scrape together some sort of a meal, and at 1 a.m. we all started off again in pitch darkness and a biting cold wind, and we reached the next stage about 8 a.m., very cold and hungry. There being now no immediate apprehension of an attempt at rescue, the strain was relaxed, and we halted

here for twenty-four hours, proceeding next day to do a double march to Miyan Kotal, a dirty caravanserai half-way down the Kotal-i-Dukhtar Pass; and the following day, the 13th November, we were taken on to Kazerun.

Here a great demonstration had been stage-managed by the gendarmerie and the local Khan, the notorious Nasr-ed-Diwan, some of whose exploits have been narrated in a previous chapter. For two or three miles from the town the road was lined on both sides by the townspeople, who yelled and hooted as we passed. The whole thing was puerile and absurd to a degree, and the bulk of the people had not the slightest idea what it was all about, and I heard shouts of "Long live King George!" amidst the objurgations as I rode along with Nasr-ed-Diwan on one side and the senior gendarmerie officer on the other; but the crowd grew thicker and more menacing as we neared the town, and began to close in behind the "kajawas" (mule-panniers), in which the ladies were travelling, and some stones began to fly, and it was a relief to reach the shelter of the gendarmerie barracks. It was a trying ordeal for the ladies, two of whom were young girls, carried along quite helpless in their little litters at a foot-pace, and surrounded by the yelling crowd of fanatics. But their courage and composure in this, as in every experience of a very trying time, were beyond praise. Mrs. Smith was an elderly lady in delicate health (she died shortly afterwards), and neither she nor Mrs. Ferguson or her two girls ever displayed the slightest nervousness or apprehension, and had nothing but contempt for the cowardly rascals who had arranged this demonstration.

Next morning, as we prepared to continue our journey, we were informed that by order of the Shiraz "Committee" all our horses and saddlery were to be taken from us and sent to Shiraz, and we found ourselves mounted on small local baggage ponies, mules, and

donkeys. However, it did not make much difference, and we pursued our march stage by stage to Borazjun, a strongly built fort-caravanserai lying near the foot of the hills at the beginning of the coastal plain some thirty-five miles from Bushire.

This was the headquarters of the Gazanfur-es-Saltaneh, one of the triumvirate of truculent local chieftains (the other two being Zair Khidhar of Ahram and Sheikh Hussain of Ahmadi) who had for so long been a thorn in the side of both the Persian and the British authorities of Bushire, and who had now thrown in their lot openly with the pro-German anti-British party of the gendarmerie.

Wassmuss himself had preceded us hither, and I had an interview with him next morning. I found him dressed as a Persian in *abbah* (cloak) and *kulah* (hat), and he had grown a beard, and posed in various ways as a Mussulman. He was very friendly in his manner, and expressed great regret that after our pleasant relations during the summer of 1913 matters should have come to this present pass.

"But after all," he said, "your people were responsible for my capture and that of my companions and caravan, and it was only by good luck, and running a considerable risk, that I escaped being carried off to India with the others, and I feel it is up to me now to get a bit of my own back on your people. It's very bad luck that you should happen to be the victim after all our pleasant times together, but it is the fortune of war and can't be helped."

He said that we should now be handed over to the Tangistani Khans, who had undertaken our safe custody, but that the ladies would be sent, under safe conduct, to Bushire.

Our Indian Sawars were kept at Borazjun, and the same afternoon the Europeans started off again in a

southerly direction (Bushire lay south-south-west), and after a march of some twelve miles, we halted for the night at a small hamlet, where some tents had been pitched for our accommodation.

Next morning our party was separated. The four ladies were sent off to Bushire in charge of one of the Persian gendarmerie officers and accompanied by Wassmuss. They passed the night at Ahmadi, and reached Bushire the next day without further adventures. Mrs. Ferguson and the girls remained at Bushire until we were all released the following August, and Mrs. Smith sailed for home. But her health had been seriously impaired by the anxiety and hardships from which she had suffered, and she died before reaching England.

The men of the party were now taken over formally from the gendarmerie by the representatives of the Tangistani Khans, and we set out on our last march to our hitherto unknown destination, the mud fort of Ahram, the headquarters of the petty chieftain, Zair Khidhar. This worthy met us a few miles out from his stronghold, and after courteous greetings conducted us to his lair—destined to be our abode for the next nine months.

Ahram is a small mud fort of the conventional Persian type, situated some thirty miles east of Bushire on the littoral plain of the Persian Gulf and about twenty miles from the sea at the nearest point. The fort consists (or rather consisted, for I believe it was all destroyed after the war) of a main central block of buildings, built of mud bricks, 30 to 40 ft. high, with a flat roof, parapeted and loopholed, and with an open space to the south enclosed by an outer wall 10 to 12 ft. high. This space was divided into two small courtyards—the inner one next the fort being the private reserve of the Khan and his family, whilst the outer one was appropriated to the prisoners and their escort. This courtyard was some 25 yards in length and 10 to 12 in width. On the southern

side of it a long, narrow single-story building, or rather shed, divided into two approximately equal portions by a partition wall, was allotted to us for our living-room, and here we ate, slept, read, and otherwise existed for the next nine months. Our guards, ten or a dozen ragged riflemen, inhabited some smaller rooms elsewhere in the courtyard, and maintained a constant supervision over us night and day. The Khan himself, with his family, lived in the main fort, whilst Wassmuss had a house of his own in the village near-by.

Here, then, we settled down to make the best of a monotonous existence. We were only some thirty miles from Bushire—so close that we could see the reflection in the sky of our warships' searchlights at night, and hear the sound of salutes fired on the King's birthday and other ceremonial occasions—and we none of us imagined that the resources of the British Empire, whether diplomatic or military, would be incapable of extricating a British Consul and a few British subjects from such an ignominious captivity within a few weeks at most. The three rebellious Khans were persons of the very smallest calibre, capable of mustering between them at most a few hundred quite unorganised "tufangchis" or riflemen. Ahram fort, situated as it was on a level plain within easy striking distance of Bushire, presented practically no obstacle of a military nature. But apart from this and the undesirability of starting a new military "sideshow" on the Gulf littoral, there were other obvious means of bringing pressure and influence to bear upon such paltry opponents, who in reality were nothing more than rather glorified brigands. But the days slipped away into weeks, and the weeks into months, and no progress of any kind was made towards our release.

Our daily life was monotonous in the extreme. Our little party of seven was reinforced a few days after our arrival by two new-comers—Mr. Christmas of the

I.E.T.D., and Dr. Azzopardy, a Maltese British subject, who had been practising as a medical officer at Shiraz. They, and also Mrs. Christmas, had been out on tour on the road when we were made prisoners, and were subsequently rounded up and brought in by the gendarmes. Mrs. Christmas was sent to join the other ladies at Bushire, leaving us nine men as prisoners at Ahram.

Six of us slept in the larger, and three in the smaller, of the two rooms allotted to us, at first on the floor wrapped up in our blankets, and later on camp cots, supplied to us from Bushire. My Persian servant had accompanied the ladies to Bushire, and our staff consisted of two Persian syces or grooms, who cooked our food for us as best they could in a little shed erected in a corner of the courtyard. The Khan supplied us with fowls, eggs, rice, and milk, and we supplemented this by stores which we were allowed to receive, though somewhat irregularly, from Bushire, so we were never short of food, and really did very well on the whole. We were also kept well supplied with books by our friends at Bushire, and our letters and papers, after being censored by Wassmuss, arrived fairly regularly.

For the first few weeks of our captivity we were allowed to walk out every second day under escort to bathe in a hot stream on the hillside a mile or two distant, which was a very pleasant distraction, and gave us some much-needed exercise; but this privilege was stopped some time in February, and for the rest of our time we had only our little compound to walk in, and sometimes an evening stroll outside the fort—carefully guarded all the time by armed men. Bridge was a welcome distraction, and indeed proved a perfect godsend. There were just eight of us (after poor Pettigrew's death), so we settled down regularly every evening to two rubbers, and no doubt got rid of a good deal of

suppressed nervous irritation and boredom during the game.

We were subject to occasional "alarums and excursions" at intervals, when our captors became excited or suspicious regarding some incident or rumour of hostile action against them from Bushire, at which times they would rush about, brandishing rifles and knives, and threatening to put an end to us all. We did not take much notice of these demonstrations, and found that our best policy was to remain perfectly calm and quiet until the storm had blown over.

The most serious scene took place on the 27th April, when a reconnaissance from Bushire approached within a few miles of our fort, and there was an exchange of shots with the tribesmen. The Khan and his followers became unusually excited, and ordered us all into the courtyard for immediate execution; but a little later, when our troops had withdrawn, they quieted down as usual, and the Khan was afterwards very apologetic about it all.

But the nervous tension produced by this scene proved too much for poor Pettigrew. As mentioned above, he had a broken leg at the time of our capture, and had to be carried all the way to Ahram in a litter, and he had been in bed ever since. He was very run down and nervy, and he died from heart failure during the afternoon after the alarm.

We dug a grave and buried him just outside the fort. He left a wife and a large family.

But for these occasional outbursts, the conditions of our confinement were by no means rigorous, and during the winter months involved nothing worse than boredom and monotony, and, of course, the humiliation of finding ourselves in the power of such insignificant rascals as Zair Khidhar and his friends. But as summer came and the heat increased, we found the life very irksome.



Our little shed had no verandahs and only a low flat roof, thinly covered with earth, and during the long days of July and August the heat was suffocating, and we had no means of mitigating it. Dr. Azzopardy, the oldest of the party, a man of about sixty, was the first to succumb, and after several stormy interviews with the Khan, we succeeded in securing his release, and he was carried off in a litter and arrived safely in Bushire the next day.

Towards the end of July the heat became almost unbearable, and there were several cases of heat-stroke; and I recollect one day (I see from the scrappy diary which I kept that it was the 29th July) three of the seven were all down at once, and the other four spent the day pouring water over them and fanning them. Fortunately, there were no more deaths, but poor Christmas became very weak; and with great difficulty, and after days of argument and persuasion, we induced the Khan, who was not really a bad creature at heart, to release him also, and he was carried off one night apparently in a dying condition; but he lived to reach Bushire and to return to England.

I thought I knew what heat was from my sojourn at Dera Ismail Khan and elsewhere in India, but anything I had ever experienced was a joke to the heat of the Persian Gulf in July and August under these conditions.

All this time there had been a constant stream of correspondence passing between myself and the Resident in Bushire (Colonel Trevor) regarding the possibility of coming to terms with the three rebellious Khans, and of securing our release by exchange or otherwise. Part of this correspondence was opened and censored by Wassmuss, but the greater part was in invisible writing which enabled me to explain our situation and to make suggestions more freely than could be done in open correspondence. The invisible ink was easily enough made—it was simply powdered alum dissolved in water which,

although a well-known device and easily detected, was good enough in the circumstances. But the difficulty was to inform our friends at Bushire in the first instance that we were proposing to communicate with them by this means. We sent the necessary information by two channels. The first was a friendly Indian carpenter, who had been doing some repairs in the fort, and who agreed to take a message for us if there were no chance of his being detected. So we prepared a brief message written in the Morse code on a tiny slip of thin paper, rolled the paper up into a spill, and slipped it into a hole bored in the carpenter's plane. A scrap of putty sealed the end of the hole and a smudge of dirt rendered it invisible. This message was duly delivered to the Resident.

The second channel was a letter, openly written by me to a lady at Bushire, saying that I intended to study Italian in order to pass the time, and asking her kindly to procure and send me the three following books:

- (1) Rascaldate sul Fuoco. (Heat over the fire.)
- (2) La Parte Bianca. (The white part.)
- (3) Di questa Lettera. (Of this letter.)

I happened to know that Wassmuss knew no Italian, and I trusted to his ignorance of the language to allow this rather barefaced bluff to succeed—as it did. Needless to say a message in sympathetic ink was written on the white part of the letter, and duly disclosed itself on the paper being heated. The message contained full directions for invisible writing, and warned our correspondents to be prepared for it whenever our letter paper showed a pinprick through the left-hand top corner.

Free communication was thus established between ourselves and our friends at Bushire, which enabled us to send any message we desired, and the negotiations which led eventually to our release were materially facilitated; and we in turn received news regarding the war,

etc., which was most acceptable during the intervals when we were deprived of our letters and newspapers, as occurred every now and then owing to some whim of Wassmuss or the Khan.

We also, by this means, perfected a plan of escape, and received from Bushire maps of the route and full directions; and a compass came soldered up in the middle of a box of Huntley & Palmer's Mixed Biscuits. Our plan was well thought out and quite feasible, but we were obliged to abandon it, as the physical condition of some members of our little party made it impossible for them to undertake the thirty-mile trek across-country, and we could not reconcile ourselves to leaving them behind to face further imprisonment and possible, and indeed probable, ill-treatment at the hands of our semi-savage gaolers.

The Khan, Zair Khidhar, was a curious study. He was totally uneducated and ignorant, and vain-glorious and boastful to an almost insane extent. This was partly due, no doubt, to flattery from Wassmuss and messages which were supposed to have arrived for him from the Kaiser and from the Amir of Afghanistan, etc., telling him what a fine fellow he was, and so on. But apart from this he was naturally a vain, unstable creature, and there were days when he would emerge from the inner recesses of his fort and stalk about the courtyard, brandishing a long spear and telling everybody what a fine fellow he was.

We used to pull his leg a good deal, and cross-examine him as to why he was keeping us prisoners, what he expected to get out of it, etc., etc., till he became heartily sick of us, and used to creep out of the fort in the early hours of the morning, and remain away all day in order to avoid us with our interminable, and indeed unanswerable questions. As time went on, and no help came from Germany, and the permanent menace of our troops at

Bushire remained, he gradually came to realise that he and his friends were backing the wrong horse, and that there was no prospect of Wassmuss's promises being realised. We could see that the logic of events was steadily producing its effect on his foolish volatile mind, and his attitude towards us became more and more friendly and even subservient. He began to grant us certain privileges—we were allowed, for instance, to bathe once a week in the irrigation channels, which watered the fields outside the fort, and it must have been an amusing sight to have seen us wallowing in these muddy ditches—which, as we had no baths of any kind, we were only too glad to do. And he actually lent me a gun one day, and let me shoot some partridges in his garden by the fort.

In fact the end was in sight, and after interminable haggling and evasions Colonel Trevor succeeded in getting him and his two friends to agree to reasonable terms—we were to be released in exchange for certain of their people who had been captured by our troops at different times, and they were to be paid a sum of money which they had had in deposit in Bushire, and which our authorities had confiscated.

So at 5.30 p.m. on the 7th August, our little party rode out of the mud fort where we had spent so many weary months. We passed a night at a small hamlet a few miles farther on, and moved on again a little farther the next day. The 9th was spent chiefly in wrangling with our captors regarding minor points of the settlement, and listening to their interminable diatribes against the perfidy of our authorities; and up to the very last moment we never knew whether they would stick to their agreement or not. Finally, however, they fixed 5.30 on the following evening for the exchange to take place, and we wrote to Colonel Trevor accordingly.

We set out the next afternoon accompanied by the Khan and the usual mob of rag-tag and bobtail—some

mounted and some on foot—and at 5.15 we arrived at the rendezvous. It had been arranged that the two parties were to halt about a mile apart, and we were glad to see the contingent from Bushire at their station across the plain. An emissary from each side then rode across to verify the number of the prisoners before the actual exchange took place, and we sat happily chatting with our captors awaiting the return of our messenger. The officer sent from the British column rode back after greeting us, to report that we were “all present and correct,” and we soon saw the Khan’s messenger riding towards us. He called the Khan aside and whispered something to him, and we gathered that there was a hitch somewhere. It appeared that instead of the ten Tangistani prisoners, who were to have been produced, only nine had been brought; and the missing man, as it unfortunately happened, was no less a person than the Khan’s own nephew—the most important of them all!

When this news leaked out there was a scene of great excitement—the tribesmen rushing about and shouting, and declaiming against the incorrigible perfidy of the British, and threatening to shoot us all out of hand. We, however, sat very quietly where we were, and presently the old Khan cooled down and came and sat beside us, and we learnt what had happened. It was all due to a mistake. The man in question had got mixed up with some Turkish prisoners of war and had been sent off elsewhere, and would be arriving at Bushire in a week or ten days.

The Khan said that he was satisfied that this was really the case, and that he was willing to proceed with the exchange of prisoners, but in order to satisfy his tribesmen he would have to keep one of us as a hostage for the safety and eventual release of his nephew.

We agreed that this was reasonable, and it was arranged that one of us should remain behind as a hostage

for the safe delivery of the missing man, and that the others should be duly exchanged. Both Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Smith volunteered to remain; but as they were both married men, and as I was the Government representative, it was clearly my duty to stay behind, and so it was settled.

The two little groups of prisoners then advanced with an escort of three or four men to the centre of the plain, and passed on to their own friends and countrymen. The Tangistani ex-prisoners were rapturously greeted on arrival by their friends and relatives, and by nightfall I found myself riding back again with a very cheery crowd over the same road I had so hopefully traversed a few hours before. But the conditions were now very different. The tribesmen realised that the whole thing was due simply to a mistake, and were all most friendly and cordial, and the Khan impressed upon me that I was no longer to regard myself as a prisoner, but as an honoured guest.

And so I passed the next ten days, a little impatiently perhaps, but tranquil in mind, in a small hamlet near-by. I had books, and we made one or two little expeditions to call on neighbouring Khans, and on the 10th of August the missing man duly turned up at Bushire. The Khan himself rode with me for a few miles, when we bade each other farewell; and accompanied only by one of his henchmen I rode into Bushire, where I arrived about sunset and was hospitably received by Colonel Trevor at the British Residency.

I left a few days later by steamer for Bombay *en route* first to Simla and then for home.

As I am only dealing in this book with the train of events which led up to, and synchronised with, my personal experiences in the various countries where I served from time to time, I need say nothing here regarding the subsequent history of Persia or of the province of Fars during

the latter years of the war, or of the various personalities who have been mentioned. But I cannot conclude this chapter without a few words about that very remarkable man, Herr Wassmuss, who played so prominent a part in the affairs of South Persia at this period. I have already given some description of his activities at Shiraz and in the neighbourhood prior to the outbreak of war, and of his deputation by the German Government on a special mission to stir up anti-British feeling in Persia with Afghanistan as a possible objective. This programme having been thwarted by the vigilance and the prompt action of the British authorities at Bushire, he concentrated his efforts on Shiraz and the southern district of Fars, where he found plenty of inflammable and anti-British material to work on, and where he had the able and active support of the Swedish gendarmerie. Further to impress the tribesmen, and to strengthen his influence among them, he assumed Persian dress, and posed, so I was informed, as a Mussulman. At any rate he certainly acquired great authority and prestige, and for a long time, until the facts of the case became too strong for him, his stories of the progress of the war and of the imminent arrival of German or Turkish troops were implicitly believed. He made a pretence (so I was told—I did not see this myself so cannot vouch for it) of being in direct wireless communication with Germany, and would carry on conversations on an apparatus which he had rigged up, purporting to be speaking to the Kaiser himself, and conveying gracious and encouraging messages from the Emperor to his dupes.

But his life must have been very arduous and one of constant danger. He lived in extreme simplicity in the native manner on native food, and rode continually about the country from place to place and from tribe to tribe in every extreme of climate, and always at the mercy

of these treacherous fanatical people. The capture of a British Consular officer and other Europeans was, of course, a great coup, and he regarded us as his most valuable asset in his anti-British campaign, and throughout our period of captivity we were regarded merely as pawns to be treated well or ill as happened to suit his game at the moment; and there was a continual duel between him and the Khan as to our treatment and the question of our release. On the day we left the fort *en route* to Bushire, he joined us, and rode alongside me for some distance explaining his attitude towards us, and admitting that our release was a serious blow to his plans.

As to his subsequent history, I never learnt exactly what happened to him after we left Ahram, but I believe that he left Tangistan, and after various escapades and adventures elsewhere in Persia was taken prisoner by our troops, escaped, and was again captured, and finally released and repatriated.

Thus ended my term of service in Persia, extending from 1909 to 1916—an eventful period: more so even than my sojourn in Tibet.



## CHAPTER XIII

### MISSION TO SIBERIA

(1918)

IT was curious to plunge into a changed world after my cloistered life in Persia. Simla had given me no idea of what the war areas or England were like. Everything there was going on much as usual—the usual hill-station gaieties, and the little hierarchy of officials, busy with their own affairs, and in many cases, both civil and military, apparently completely out of touch with the realities of the situation. Indeed, the only overt sign that there “was a war on” was the appearance of the officers of Army Headquarters in uniform instead of the customary mufti. Bombay was busy enough with its war hospitals and arrival and departure of troops and wounded. But the Canal brought the reality of the war home to me for the first time—the usually deserted banks busy with a thousand activities: Tommies in sun-helmets and shirt-sleeves waving and calling to us as we passed along, new railway lines, dumps of stores, etc., etc.

We got through the Mediterranean without incident—zig-zagging most of the way, and taking it in turns to keep watch for submarines. The journey from Marseilles through France presented similar busy, and to me novel, scenes. We crossed the Channel on a perfect summer day from Boulogne to Folkestone on a crowded leave-ship, escorted by T.B.D.'s and aeroplanes—a wonderful picture to anyone like myself who had emerged

suddenly like Rip-Van-Winkle into the new world at war.

I need say nothing about war-time in England. My experiences were no different from those of millions of others, and in these reminiscences I am trying to concentrate on such of my experiences as have been at all out of the common.

It took me a year at home to recover from the effects of my Persian experiences (I had been very ill part of the time whilst a prisoner, and the after-effects were difficult to shake off). But towards the end of 1917 I was feeling more myself again, and when Lord Beaverbrook was appointed "Minister of Information" early in 1918, I secured an introduction to him through my friends, Mr. L. M. S. Amery and Colonel John Buchan, and he requested me to proceed to Siberia, where the situation was very involved and obscure, to report to him on the position of affairs, and to do anything possible to further the cause of the Allies and of our friends amongst the Russians.

We sailed from Liverpool on the S.S. *Carpathia* on the 10th April, in the mysterious manner customary in war-time, and with a typical war-time list of passengers. There were three or four Mercantile Marine Captains, all of whom had been torpedoed once, twice, or thrice, going to take command of some Russian vessels in Canadian waters, and some young Marconi lads for the same destination; and a batch of more or less disabled officers from the French Front, deputed to travel and speak in the United States on their war experiences. These latter were picked men, all quite young (in the twenties), hailing from all parts of the Empire, and covering a wide range of professions and occupations. They included, for instance, a lawyer from South Africa, an Australian politician, an English farmer, an Oxford Don, a tea-merchant from Shanghai, and a poet! I also made friends

with a young Irish-American who had joined the Air Force in Canada early in the war, been wounded in France, and sent over to England, where he had been shot down and severely wounded and crippled in the defence of London. He had now been invalided out of the Service and was on his way home—a most cheery and plucky lad.

It was certainly one of the few pleasures and privileges of war-time to meet on such friendly terms so many fine and interesting characters whom, in the ordinary circumstances of life, one would never have had the chance to encounter. And tongues were loosed, and personal experiences narrated which, a few years before, would have been almost inconceivable.

It took us eleven days to reach New York by some circuitous route, and again I found myself in a new world, incredibly different from the New York which I had seen just ten years before. The war enthusiasm was at this time at its height. The terrible crisis in France had sent its reverberations all through America, and an intensified campaign was in progress for the collection of funds for the Fifth Liberty Loan. All down Fifth Avenue allied flags were flying, and lusty orators were bawling through megaphones from hustings. Anyone in a British officer's uniform became an immediate centre of attraction, and one was embarrassed by an avalanche of friendly greetings and offers of hospitality from perfect strangers.

But it was really delightful to move in so friendly an atmosphere. There could be no mistake about New York's feelings towards the Allies and towards the war in which America was now playing so important a part. Apart from the great organised propaganda campaign then in progress, and the martial enthusiasm of the officers and officials with whom one was brought into contact, I was much struck by the deep-seated, almost sentimental, feelings evoked by the crisis among the simple everyday

folk in shops, offices, etc. I have known the most prosaic-looking little shopman dart into his back premises to rout out some poem or heart-stirring speech which he had cut out of an English newspaper (one of these I remember was Hardy's "Men Who March Away"), and an assistant in a bookshop said to me, "Well, at any rate, we shall never have all this old anti-English stuff about George III, etc., taught in our schools again. We're friends now, at last, in spite of all the mischief-makers."

For the rest, New York gave me an almost overpowering impression of luxury and well-being after poor, old, grief-stricken, impoverished England, with its ration-tickets, petrol restrictions, and women in mourning and men in hospital blue everywhere.

One of my first visits was to the British Consulate. The Consul-General was out, but I was shown into the Vice-Consul's office, where I was delighted to recognise Mr. W. A. Smart, from whom I had taken over the Shiraz Consulate, and whom I had last met half-way between Shiraz and Isfahan as described in Chapter X. After comparing notes of our experiences during the intervening period, we went to pay a call on the newly appointed British Provost-Marshal in New York (a purely war-time billet, of course), Colonel Fraser Hunter, who, we discovered, had also been in that part of the world, as he had accompanied General Sykes's Column for the relief of Shiraz as its Chief of the Staff. It was an extraordinary coincidence that we three experts on the province of Fars should thus meet in New York, and there in a Broadway office we compared notes and exchanged all the latest news regarding our old friends, the Saulat-ed-Daulah, etc., and the intricacies of South Persian politics.

I spent altogether about ten days in the United States, during which time I twice visited Washington, where I met Lord Reading, then High Commissioner and Special

Ambassador to the U.S.A., Mr. Will Irwin, Director of Propaganda in foreign countries, and other prominent persons, and discussed with them the situation and possible policies in Siberia. I had an amusing, but rather alarming, experience whilst at Washington. I visited the theatre there one night with two young American airmen with whom I had made friends in the hotel. About the middle of the performance the manager appeared on the stage and announced that there was a British Lieut.-Colonel present who had recently had some interesting experiences in the East who would be glad to address a few words to the audience. There was loud applause in which I innocently joined until I found, to my horror, that I was the Lieut.-Colonel referred to, and the next minute I was pushed up on to the stage totally unprepared with any kind of address, and to add to my horror I then discovered that the President himself, together with Mrs. Wilson, were present in the stage box! However, I did the best I could, and gave a very brief description of some of the features of the eastern theatre of war, and added some appropriate remarks regarding the great part which America was now playing in the struggle for liberty—and so on. My young friends, I learnt afterwards, had given me away to the management, and were full of glee at the way in which I had been trapped.

Thus armed with the latest information, and with the views of the United States Government on the important question of allied policy in Siberia, I left New York on the 1st May, and travelled *via* Montreal and the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver, and sailed from Victoria in a Japanese steamship on the 11th May. Here, again, we had the usual miscellaneous war-time collection on board: a Yukon pilot *en route* for Mesopotamia to pilot boats on the Tigris and Euphrates; an Arizona cowboy appointed to the United States Embassy Staff at Tokio; three young Britishers on their way to join the Chartered

Bank of India at Yokohama; and a French abbé on some mysterious mission which was not revealed.

The voyage to Yokohama was calm and uneventful. I spent a week in Japan visiting Tokio, where I met the British Ambassador, Sir George Conyngham Greene, the United States Ambassador, Mr. Morris, and numbers of others who were interested in, and could give me information regarding, the Siberian situation and Russia generally. There were few outward signs of the war to be observed in Japan. Everyday life was proceeding quite normally, much as I remembered it ten years before, and there was no shortage of food-stuffs or other commodities. In fact, Japan's military share in the war was only nominal, being confined to her intervention in Shan-Tung and increased garrisons here and there in Manchuria, etc.; but her naval predominance in all these eastern waters was very obvious—indeed, at this period, she held a virtual monopoly of the shipping trade in the Pacific and China seas, and her warships guarded these regions on behalf of the Allies.

Leaving Tsuruga on the 1st June, we arrived at Vladivostok on the 3rd, and in a moment I was plunged into a most extraordinary medley of international politics, intrigues, and rivalries. A brief résumé of preceding events is necessary to bring the story of the Siberian situation up to date.

First as regards (of all people in the world!) the Czecho-Slovaks, whose troops dominated the situation. The entry of Austria, as a combatant, on the side of Germany, was immediately seized upon by Prof. Masaryk and the other Czecho-Slovak leaders as a heaven-sent opportunity for throwing off the Habsburg yoke and striking a blow for national independence. The large community of Czecho-Slovaks living in Russia at once sought, and obtained, the Czar's permission to form a Czecho-Slovak Brigade, and in spite of the constant

intrigues directed against them by pro-Germans and other hostile elements, they succeeded in organising an effective little fighting force which did good service on the Russian Front. As the war progressed their numbers were continually reinforced by the capture, or the voluntary surrender, of individuals and groups from the Czecho-Slovak units on the other side, and at the time of the revolution (1917) the total Czecho-Slovak force in Russia could muster some 70,000 men altogether. The changed situation produced by the revolution, and the rapprochement between the Bolshevik leaders and the Germans, placed the Czecho-Slovaks in a difficult position. They found themselves in a sort of no-man's land—unable on the one hand to return to their own country or, on the other, to support the new régime in Russia.

The detailed history of their adventures and vicissitudes during these eventful months constitutes a volume in itself; but it may be summarised by saying that, as a way out of the difficulty, it was decided gradually to evacuate the Czecho-Slovaks eastwards through Siberia to Vladivostok, with the object of their eventual repatriation from that port. At the time of my arrival in Vladivostok, this programme had proceeded so far that a force of some 15,000 men (under the command of General Dieterichs) was actually assembled at Vladivostok, and the remainder of the force was echeloned along the Trans-Siberian Railway from the Urals to near Irkutsk.

Between these two sections was established a Bolshevik block occupying Irkutsk, and extending thence eastwards past Baikal to the Manchurian frontier. Here the brigand Cossack leader, Semenoff, held sway, and in the Manchurian section of the Trans-Siberian Railway there existed various elements dominated by General Horvath, the ex-Imperialist President of that section of the railway.

There were also thousands of German and Austrian ex-prisoners of war in the Bolshevik section and scattered about elsewhere, who were hostile to the Czecho-Slovaks and friendly to the Bolsheviks.

By this time it had become abundantly evident that the Bolshevik régime was actively hostile to the Czecho-Slovaks, and had no intention of permitting their peaceful exodus to continue according to plan. The western group had had numerous skirmishes with the Bolsheviks, and was compelled to maintain an armed and vigilant defensive. The leaders of the two widely sundered forces, however, were able to communicate with one another, and between them they were concerting measures to end the impasse and to establish contact.

It was at this stage of the drama that I arrived at Vladivostok, where the local situation was roughly as follows: the Bolsheviks were in effective possession of the town and the district up to the Chinese frontier, and had instituted the Soviet form of government under Local Councils in the chief centres. The rags and tatters of the old régime, which had escaped imprisonment or massacre, had fled eastwards before the terror, and the town (of Vladivostok was crammed with fugitives—hundreds of imperialist ex-officers and whole families of the so-called bourgeoisie, mostly destitute, and subsisting as best they could, huddled up anyhow in crowded tenement houses. No Allied troops had as yet appeared on the scene, as the question of the policy to be pursued in Siberia was still being debated in the Allied capitals, but four of the Allied warships (British, American, French, and Japanese) were stationed in the harbour. And, as already stated, there were some 15,000 Czecho-Slovak troops in barracks on the outskirts of the town.

About this time the western section of the Czecho-Slovaks, under that 'courageous and 'energetic young officer, Colonel Gaida, finding their way to the east



blocked by Bolshevik troops, attacked and captured the town of Irkutsk, and by a daring and skilful manoeuvre circumvented the Bolsheviks holding the Baikal area, and thus prevented, just in time, the destruction of the tunnels which would have hopelessly blocked the line; and they thus secured possession of the railway line right up to the Manchurian frontier.

In order to secure effective co-operation with Gaida, it was now necessary that General Dieterichs should be in command of the situation at Vladivostok. His troops, after their arrival there, had hitherto maintained a perfectly passive and neutral attitude in their dealings with the Bolshevik authorities. They were poorly armed, having only some 2,000 to 3,000 rifles for a force of some 15,000 men; but Vladivostok was a vast depot of munitions of war of all descriptions, which had been dispatched there by the Allied Powers earlier in the war for the use of the Russian armies, and the capture of this depot was a matter of paramount importance.

The Soviet authorities at Vladivostok, although quite as ready as their friends elsewhere to persecute ex-royalists and respectable people, were not altogether free agents, and they found their style rather cramped by the presence of the four Allied warships in the harbour, the influence of the Allied Consuls (especially the British), and the proximity of the Czecho-Slovakian force, under General Dieterichs, himself an ex-imperialist Russian General. Beyond filling up the prisons, therefore, with people they disliked, and an occasional murder after dark, they had not been able to do very much damage; but as long as they held the reins of power in the town and district, any active movement on the part of the Czecho-Slovaks was impossible, and the junction of their two forces was indefinitely delayed.

General Dieterichs, therefore, decided that the time had come to assert himself, and during the weeks following

my arrival he was busy perfecting his plans. It was a period of extraordinary interest and suppressed excitement. Rumours of every sort were current daily, and the Consuls and the Commanders of the warships were in constant consultation as to their attitude in the event of disturbances in the town. The 29th June was the date finally fixed for the coup to take place, and when I wended my way to the British Consulate, always the focus of any activity, the first thing in the morning I found our Consul, Mr. (now Sir) Robert Hodgson, as usual, calm, dignified, and incisive, the centre of an excited group of various nationalities all anxious to ascertain his views and to seek his advice. All plans, however, had been well and truly laid, and there was little to be done except to keep in touch with the situation as it developed from hour to hour.

General Dieterichs had moved his troops into the town during the night, and early in the morning he surrounded the Soviet headquarters and captured the principal leaders, and occupied strategic positions in the town and peninsula. The movement was entirely unexpected, and there was no time or opportunity for any concerted resistance. Isolated stands by groups and individuals were made here and there, and sporadic firing continued during the day. The only serious resistance was made by a few Bolshevik soldiers who occupied the staff barracks in the big square opposite the railway station, but they were soon routed out by the Czecho-Slovaks, and the prisoners led off amidst yells of delight and triumph from the huge crowd which had assembled in the square to witness their discomfiture.

Early in the day the British and Japanese landed parties of bluejackets to patrol the town and help to maintain order, and they were joined later by some Chinese and Americans. The small Bolshevik flotilla made an attempt to put to sea during the morning, but

they were ordered to heave to and to send representatives to receive the instructions of the Commodore of the Allied ships. A delegation accordingly presented itself on board H.M.S. *Suffolk*, where they were received by Captain Payne and the other Commanders, and informed that they could not be allowed to put to sea, and were given one hour to submit to disarmament. It was a picturesque meeting. A dejected group of Russian officers and sailors on the one hand, and the Allied naval commanders with a sprinkling of Consuls and military officers on the other. The terms were eventually agreed to, and the Bolshevik ships rendered innocuous.

I left the *Suffolk* late that night, and found Vladivostok in festival—cheerful, laughing crowds everywhere, and the Czecho-Slovaks marching and singing through the streets.

In fact, the whole thing was organised and carried out remarkably well, and the loss of life was trifling. In a day the Czecho-Slovaks (i.e. the Allies) found themselves in possession of this important town and harbour, and of a vast store of munitions of war of all sorts and kinds, and in a position to begin a fresh campaign with the object of linking up with their comrades in Western Siberia, and so, if necessary, of forming a new front against the Bolsheviks on the Urals.

During the month that followed matters moved apace. Within a day or two the Czecho-Slovaks were advancing westwards, driving outlying Bolshevik contingents before them, and were very soon in occupation of the railway line up to the Manchurian frontier. In Vladivostok itself order was maintained after their departure by an international gendarmerie of British, American, Japanese, and Chinese bluejackets, whilst the Allied Consuls conferred with the leaders of the various Russian political parties as to the future government of the town and district and eventually of Siberia. It was during this period

that the Allied Governments at last made up their minds to take action, and almost daily cables to their representatives announced that they had decided on effective intervention, and that troops and plenipotentiaries were on their way to Vladivostok.

Early in August the first contingent, the British, appeared on the scene in the shape of the 25th Middlesex Battalion, consisting of B1 men from Hong-Kong under the command of that gallant and stalwart Labour leader, Colonel Ward, C.B. They were received with due ceremony, and marched off to their barracks in the quarter vacated by the Czecho-Slovaks. This regiment was followed at short intervals by some French Colonial troops from Indo-China, and Japanese and American contingents.

The British troops were soon in action. Although not properly speaking a first-line unit at all, they proceeded, within a few days of their arrival, to assist the Czecho-Slovaks in holding off the Bolsheviks from the railway line north of Nikolsk, and rendered a very good account of themselves in the fighting which followed. The Japs also took part in this small campaign, but the American troops were under stringent orders from their own Government on no account to do any fighting, and they had to content themselves with promenading the streets of Vladivostok.

The soldiers were followed in due course by civilian plenipotentiaries. The first to appear on the already crowded and motley scene was the British High Commissioner, Sir Charles Eliot, a man of great linguistic attainments and with a distinguished career in the Diplomatic Service, who had, however, resigned from the Service some fourteen years before, and was at this time Principal of the University of Hong-Kong. Other similar officials from Japan and the United States followed in due course, and on the 5th September, General Alfred

Knox arrived with his Staff to take command of the British Units.

All this activity at the base, however, and the arrival of all these important functionaries, did not have much effect on the actual progress of events in Siberia. As previously noted, General Dieterichs wasted no time when once he found himself master of the situation at Vladivostok, and he pushed away vigorously westwards, and by the end of August he had joined hands with the main Czecho-Slovak army near Chita on the western Manchurian border. It was a great achievement. These isolated strangers in that vast and now hostile country, cut off from any adequate base and unsupported by Allied troops, had not only held their own and retained their discipline and morale, but had now succeeded in taking possession of some 4,000 miles of railway line, and thus practically dominated the whole of Siberia.

Life in Vladivostok during all this period presented, as may be imagined, some unusual features. It was a welter of international politics, intrigues, and rivalries; and no one, least of all the Russians themselves, had the slightest idea what was the real policy of the Allied nations, or what would be the eventual outcome of all this intense activity. My immediate difficulty was of a domestic nature, namely, how to secure adequate accommodation for myself and for the various officials and other Britishers who kept dropping in upon us unexpectedly from the blue. Fortunately, I met a good Samaritan in the person of a local business man, a Mr. Smith, who, as business called him to Japan, placed his large and comfortable house at my disposal, and I was thus able to entertain these birds of passage in a semi-official capacity.

Prominent amongst them were the Press Correspondents, notably my old friend, Mr. David Fraser, of "The Times," who joined us from his post in Peking, and

Mr. Bernard Falk, representing the "Daily Mail." One of my various duties was to censor their cables to their respective journals, and it was a liberal education in itself to mark the masterly manner in which these "telegraphese" reports of the situation were phrased for the edification of the British public, and the bold contrasting styles of these two able journalists. Some of Mr. Falk's terse and epigrammatic descriptions of Russian life and manners remain fresh in my memory to this day, and I shall not easily forget our occasional repasts at the only passable restaurant in Vladivostok, the "Zolotoy Rog" (Golden Horn), more familiarly known to its English frequenters as the "Solitary Dog."

But besides these temporary visitors, there was quite a little community of British business men, who had been compelled by force of circumstances to migrate to Vladivostok from their avocations in European Russia, and were kicking their heels there waiting on events. Amongst these I was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of Mr. G. E. Perkins, a man of infinite resource, who knew the people and the country and who spoke the language fluently; and of Mr. Rees Harris, also a Russian scholar, who undertook the duties of Reuter's correspondent. With the help of these two gentlemen, and other friends in the British and Russian communities, I organised a news service, and also arranged for the publication of a daily paper in Russian under the editorship of an able Russian journalist.

The social field was already adequately occupied by the American Y.M.C.A., which did splendid work in assisting the refugees to find shelter and food, and in looking after their children's education, etc. I was, however, able to do something for the numerous lads who were wandering about without any proper schools to attend or other form of supervision. The Chinese Customs Department were good enough to place at my disposal the

services of Mr. FitzRoy Lloyd, their Commissioner at Shanghai, who had devoted much time and attention to the Scout Movement in China and elsewhere. He was given leave to join me at Vladivostok, and we immediately set to work to organise troops of Russian Scouts at that place, and later farther afield in Siberia; and when we left Vladivostok early in October the movement was firmly established under its own Commissioners, and there were some three hundred Scouts enrolled at Vladivostok alone, and the nuclei of other troops in several other towns. Like everything else connected with this ill-fated inter-Allied venture, the whole movement inevitably collapsed on the withdrawal of the Allied forces, and I have never heard what eventually became of our poor Scouts.

Vladivostok itself during the summer months is a pleasant enough place of abode. The town is most beautifully situated—a city built on hills rising from the ocean, with exquisite views across the bay of wooded heights and long peninsulas—like an enlarged edition of Constantinople. The climate at this time of year is good—mild and showery, not unlike English summer weather—and the early autumn days and nights are perfect. Provisions of every kind were abundant—salmon, mutton, cereals, fruits, etc.—all excellent and very cheap. The Russians, like ourselves, are great “week-enders.” Everyone who can possibly manage it has a country cottage (called a “dacha”), to which he retires for his week-end. An English friend lent me a charming “dacha” a few miles out, close to the sea, and we had little parties there on our spare Saturdays and Sundays. Altogether, apart from politics and revolutions, the amenities of life were considerable, and there were many pleasant interludes in the sordid and tragic drama which was unfolding itself around us.

The centre of all social and other activity was the

British Consulate. Our representative, Mr. Robert Hodgson, was the very man for the job at this difficult period. He spoke the language fluently and well, and had won the confidence and respect of all nationalities and parties, including even the extremest Bolsheviks, by his combined tact and firmness, and by his sterling character. Everyone in turn came to him for help and advice, and a day at the Consulate presented a panorama of all the various elements which went to the make-up of the local situation. I have seen him suavely interviewing a deputation of the Soviet leaders (before their elimination by the Czecho-Slovaks)—awkward, embarrassed, working-class men, roughly clad, cloth caps in hand—and gradually converting them from their half-sulky, half-defiant attitude to more reasonable views on the particular point at issue. And after the *coup de main* of the 29th June, he had to deal with the equally difficult, and even more exasperating, leaders of the numerous Russian political sects—ranging from revolutionaries but little removed from Bolshevism to intransigent Imperialists. And the Consuls, and naval and military leaders of the Allied countries, also valued and sought his counsel. He was equally fortunate, if I may say so without disrespect, in his handling of the various High Commissioners and other exalted persons, all sublimely ignorant of the local conditions, who were suddenly shot on to the stage in a pretty steady stream, one after another, when the Allied Governments eventually decided on some form of active intervention in Siberia.

We were lucky, too, in our Naval Commander, Captain Payne,<sup>1</sup> a shrewd, resolute officer, who combined diplomacy with executive ability and energy, and who was always ready in an emergency with practical help and suggestions. H.M.S. *Suffolk*, under his command, did notable work at this time of crisis. Her men were

<sup>1</sup> Now Vice-Admiral C. R. Payne, C.B.E.



the first ashore to help in the policing of the town, and later one of her 6-inch guns, with a detachment of blue-jackets under the command of Lieut.-Commander Wolfe Murray, did good service inland right up to the Ural front.

A word here as to the Czecho-Slovak troops as I saw them. They made a most remarkable impression on all who knew anything of their work in Siberia. They were evidently a body of men animated, from their commander to the youngest soldier, by a spirit of pure and true patriotism. They were fighting a lone fight in a foreign land, completely cut off from their native country, and without the backing of any recognised or ordered form of government. Indeed, at this time, Czecho-Slovakia as such did not exist—it was a figment, an aspiration, a political ideal. Yet they held firmly together, and through all these years of trouble and tribulation they preserved their national spirit and loyalty to their leaders intact. It is impossible to withhold one's admiration both for the leaders and for the followers in such a struggle for a great national cause under such unexampled difficulties, and if any nation has ever merited its independence, Czecho-Slovakia has certainly merited hers.

It was a pleasure to be associated, even temporarily, with such a body of men. Their conduct was uniformly excellent. They gave no trouble to anybody—there was no crime amongst them, civil or military—and they kept themselves to themselves and loyally obeyed and followed their chosen leaders. They fought gallantly as long as there was the faintest hope of maintaining a front against the Bolsheviks, and they withdrew eventually only when the dissensions among the rival Russian parties and the lack of proper support from the Allies rendered any other programme impracticable.

One striking national quality impressed me greatly during my brief acquaintance with them, namely, their

universal musical genius. During all the rigours of their Siberian experiences (and I have only touched very lightly here on this aspect of the matter) each regiment preserved its band and its musical instruments, and we were treated to several excellent concerts from the regiments at Vladivostok.

However, my part in the proceedings had now to terminate abruptly. Before leaving England I had been informed that I had been selected for the post of Resident in Nepal when it became vacant towards the end of the year, and early in September I received a telegram instructing me to join my new post by the end of November; and on the 2nd October I handed over all the various undertakings in which I was interested to Mr. Hodgson, said good-bye to all my friends of so many different nationalities, and, accompanied by Mr. FitzRoy Lloyd, who also had to rejoin his post, I took train for Harbin *en route* to Shanghai, and so to India.

Thus ended my brief personal experience with another curious little side-show of the Great War, but before finally quitting the scene I may summarise, in a few words, the subsequent course of events in Siberia which terminated in the somewhat ignominious evacuation of the country by the Allied nations.

The Czecho-Slovak troops, after reuniting in August, pushed at once vigorously westwards to the Vistula and the Urals, and extended on a broad front, some eight hundred miles from north to south, as a barrier against the Bolsheviks. They relied, of course, upon effective assistance from the Allies, and also upon the support of the anti-Bolshevik Russians in Siberia; and there can be no doubt that had this assistance materialised, Siberia, at any rate, could have been saved from Bolshevism, and in all probability the Bolshevik movement itself would eventually have been destroyed.

But it was not to be. The support accorded by the

Allies was far from being effective. It was, on the contrary, of the most half-hearted and spasmodic character. The only troops which actually supported the Czecho-Slovaks at all were one weak British battalion of 81 men, with a few bluejackets, and a small contingent of French Colonial troops. Whilst of the two nations whose resources and geographical situation rendered real help possible, the Japanese never got any farther than Irkutsk, and the Americans remained firmly established at the base at Vladivostok.

As to the Russians, the position was hopeless from the first. They were divided amongst themselves into a multitude of rival sects and political parties, and any kind of unity of action was impossible. An effort was made to unite all parties under Admiral Kolchak, who received the strong support, at any rate, of the British, but his methods savoured too much of the old imperialist régime, and he never secured the good-will and co-operation either of the Czecho-Slovaks or of the bulk of the Russians themselves. In the circumstances, any progress was out of the question, and the Czecho-Slovaks could not be expected to continue to hold a front against the Bolsheviks indefinitely for the benefit of the Allied nations or that of the squabbling disunited inhabitants of Siberia. The history of the year 1919 consists of a long series of personal quarrels and sordid disputes and rivalries, ending in a break-up of the anti-Bolshevik front and the retirement of the Czecho-Slovaks and the other foreign elements to the east.

By the end of the year the whole country had been abandoned up to Irkutsk, and here the final act of the drama took place. In order to secure the retirement of the last of the Czecho-Slovak columns through the Baikal area, General Janin, the French Commander, who at the end of 1918 had been placed in supreme command in Siberia, was obliged to surrender Kolchak to the Irkutsk

Revolutionary Committee, by whom he was executed a few days later.

This was the end of the Allies' well-meant but abortive effort in Siberia. The last of the Czecho-Slovak troops reached Vladivostok in safety, and the whole force was gradually repatriated during the course of the year 1920.

My return to India was uneventful. From Harbin I travelled by rail through Manchuria, stopping off for a few hours at Mukden, and thence *viâ* Tientsin to Pukow, where we crossed the Yangtse, arriving at Shanghai on the evening of the 7th October—five and a half days by rail from Vladivostok. I stayed a few days at Shanghai and reviewed the Chinese Boy Scouts at the American College of Nanyang—three to four hundred of them. From Shanghai I travelled by a Japanese steamer to Singapore, touching at Hong-Kong *en route*. On leaving Hong-Kong we ran into a typhoon and had a real good tossing for two days and two nights. At Singapore I was the guest of the Governor, Sir Arthur Young, and travelled with him on his special train to Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the Federated Malay States. Thence by rail to Penang, and by British-Indo steamer to Madras. Across India to Bombay, and so to Delhi, where I found myself back in a familiar atmosphere and amongst many old friends, and I was here when the news of the Armistice reached India.

I spent a few weeks at the Foreign Department learning all I could about my new post, and early in December I left Delhi to assume my duties as British Resident in Nepal.

## CHAPTER XIV

### RESIDENT IN NEPAL

(1918-1920)

It was pleasant to find oneself back again on this frontier after ten years' absence. Nepal, although so different, had always been associated in my mind with Tibet and Sikkim. Geographically, its frontiers march with those of Tibet on the north and of Sikkim on the east; politically, there are certain problems which mutually affect all three countries more or less; whilst in the course of my experience in Tibet and Sikkim I had naturally been brought into touch with Nepalese affairs and politics. Nepal, too, had for years been represented in Tibet by her own Agent, with whom I had been well acquainted during the stay of the Mission at Lhasa and my subsequent term of service as British Trade Agent at Gyantse.

I have already mentioned, in Chapters II and III, how the Maharaja of Nepal came to our help during our Tibetan campaign in 1903 and 1904 by his gifts of yaks, etc., and by his diplomatic good offices at Lhasa. Whilst as regards Sikkim, there had long been relations (not always friendly) between the two countries, and the bulk of the population of South Sikkim consists of immigrants from Nepal and their descendants.

Before coming to my personal experiences in Nepal I may give a very brief general description of the country and of the post of the British Resident, as he was then

styled (he is now an Envoy), the officer of the Foreign Department of the Government of India who has represented his Government in Nepal ever since the year 1816.

Nepal may be described as a chunk of the Himalayan mountains 525 miles long and averaging about 100 miles in width, extending from Sikkim on the east to Garhwal on the west, and from the watershed of the Himalayan chain on the north to the low-lying tropical jungles of the Terai on the south. Its northern boundary consists of an almost continuous line of snowy peaks and ranges, and includes Mount Everest and other giants (Kinchenjunga lies on the eastern, that is the Sikkim, frontier).

Its area is some 54,000 square miles, and the population about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions. It is not, as is so often believed, one of the feudatory States of the Indian Empire, but is an entirely independent Kingdom with its own Monarch, army, system of government, etc. I shall have to refer to this important point later on in fuller detail.

The religion of the country is Hinduism—although there still remains a sprinkling of Buddhists amongst the Newars and some of the eastern tribes—and the rulers and people take a pride in the fact that Nepal is the only independent Hindu Kingdom remaining in the world, and the orthodox tenets and ceremonies of that faith are strictly observed—at any rate at the Capital, Katmandu.

The population of Nepal presents a complicated ethnological problem which has been the subject of numerous scientific treatises, but in order to give a general idea of its nature it may be classified roughly under three general headings:

First, the various tribes and sects of Mongoloid origin (such as the Gurungs, Magars, etc.), dwelling chiefly in the northern and central parts of the country. It is these who supply the bulk of the fighting men both for their own and for the Indian armies, and who are known to us generically as "Gurkhas."

Secondly, the Newars, who claim to be the original inhabitants of the Nepal valley, but who are believed by some authorities to be of Indian origin. They constitute the trading and metal-working class, and they inhabit chiefly the Katmandu valley. About one-half are Hindus and one-half Buddhists.

Thirdly, the aboriginal tribes of the malarious jungles of the Terai, where no one but they can exist during the rainy season.

There are other lesser tribes and subdivisions, but it is unnecessary to enter into their complications.

The ruling family, however, belongs to none of these three groups, but derives its origin from the Thakurs of Rajputana, whence they entered Nepal from time to time, driven out of the plains of India by successive Muhammadan invasions, and who have gradually, by right of conquest, asserted their sway over the whole country.

This is not an historical treatise, and I shall not, therefore, attempt to trace the tangled and often blood-stained story of this family through its various vicissitudes, but shall content myself by giving an account of the situation as I found it.

The standing Nepalese army numbers over 40,000 men, all drawn from the finest fighting races, and is well-armed and highly disciplined and efficient. In view of the present situation in India it is interesting to consider the significance of such a force on the immediate frontiers of the United Provinces, Behar, and Bengal.

The system of government is a curious one—although there have been a good many parallels elsewhere during the course of history. The supreme head of the State is the King, the Maharaja Dhiraja, now officially termed "His Majesty." He is treated with great ceremonial respect, and surrounded by every symbol of royalty—magnificent palaces, jewels, attendants, etc.—but actually, in practice, he is the merest figure-head, and all power

resides in the hands of the Prime Minister, the Maharaja. The Prime Minister is assisted by a Council composed of all the Chief Officers of the State, civil and military, which meets daily, and with which the Prime Minister discusses affairs of State. But its functions are purely advisory; and although the opinions of the members of the Council are valued and weighed, and their votes taken on occasion, the Prime Minister in all cases remains the sole executive and administrative authority.

It is an almost exact analogy of the system of government which formerly existed in Japan, where a figure-head Emperor was maintained in imperial state and seclusion, whilst the Prime Minister, in the shape of the Shogun, actually ruled the country.

And, again as in the case of old Japan, Nepal was, and still remains, a hermit Kingdom. Without the permission of the Nepalese Government (that is, the Prime Minister) no stranger is allowed to cross the frontiers of the country. It is true that in the Terai districts lying along the foot of the mountains the restrictions are not so severe, and quite a number of Indian traders and others cross and recross the border and reside in the villages; and permission is given nearly every year to selected parties of European sportsmen to shoot in the Terai forests. But the interior of the country is still jealously guarded and preserved against any foreign intrusion—especially by Europeans. In fact, the greater part of Nepal has never been seen by any European. The few white men who have visited the country have been permitted to travel only to Katmandu by the recognised route, and once there their movements are restricted to the valley. Every application for permission to visit Nepal is considered by the Prime Minister personally, and is granted or refused by him at his absolute discretion.”

The only exception to this rule is in the case of the British Resident (or, as he is now termed, the British



Envoy), who by virtue of the provisions of our Treaty with Nepal of 1815 is authorised to reside at the Capital.

Since 1816, therefore, a British representative has been stationed at Katmandu in the enjoyment of full diplomatic privileges. He and his staff and escort occupy a small "enclave" of a few acres on the outskirts of the city, where the necessary buildings have been constructed and are maintained by the Government of India—a Legation (see photograph facing p. 312), Legation Surgeon's house, small hospital, barracks, office accommodation, etc.

The escort was, and is, a great feature of the Legation. It consists of some 80 men, specially enlisted from high-class Hindus from the districts of Behar adjoining Nepal, and trained in their military duties by a British officer of the Indian Army, seconded yearly from his regiment for this purpose during the summer months. Besides their purely military functions of keeping guard over the Legation buildings, treasury, etc., the escort is invaluable to the Envoy on his journeys to and from Katmandu, and in his tours during the cold weather in the Terai, where, owing to the nature of the country and the lack of any kind of accommodation, he is obliged to travel with a rather elaborate camp equipage. This little special corps has its own two native officers—a Subadar and a Jemadar—and is maintained always in a high state of efficiency and discipline.

I took over charge of the Residency from my predecessor, Colonel Bayley, at Raxaul—the obscure little hamlet in the Champaran district of the province of Behar, lying on the Nepal frontier some thirty miles or so from the foot of the hills. Here the road to the Capital, Katmandu, begins, and there is a small bungalow for the use of the Resident on his way to and fro. It is a dreary spot—just a railway station and tiny hamlet, like thousands of others in the monotonous stretches of rice-fields in the endless plains of northern India. There are no



*Longest Ruler  
Chandra Sham Sher Jang  
1919*

HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA SIR CHANDRA SHAM SHER JANG LATE  
PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL



other white men, and the amenities of life are nil. However, it is only used as a jumping-off place for Nepal and elsewhere, and personally I never spent more than a day or two there at a time.

My first duty was to pay an official visit to the Prime Minister, who had come down to the plains from Katmandu on his winter tour, and was staying at his country house some miles away. I was met at the frontier by an A D C, and traversed the two or three miles to the house on an elephant (the chief means of locomotion throughout all the Terai country), was courteously received by the Maharaja, and had the first of many conversations with this most remarkable man.

As the whole history of Nepal for the last thirty years has centred round the figure of the late Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jang, and as he was Prime Minister until I finally left the country some six years later, I will take this opportunity of saying a few words about him.

At the time of our first meeting he was fifty-five years of age, and had been Prime Minister since 1901. He was a man of striking appearance (see photograph herewith), courteous and dignified in manner, but alert, forceful, and brimful of intelligence and interest in any topic under discussion. He spoke English fluently and well. As absolute ruler of the Kingdom under Nepal's peculiar form of constitution, he made himself acquainted, and kept himself *au fait*, with every detail of the administration, and he was a profound and careful student of foreign affairs, and of every political phase and personality which affected the British Empire and India especially. During the whole of his term of office he had carried on the policy of his great predecessor, his uncle, Jang Bahadur, and had followed Jang Bahadur's precedent in himself visiting England, and in placing the resources of Nepal at the disposal of the British Empire in time of need—of which more anon. He was, in a

word, at once a diplomat, a man of affairs, and a natural born ruler and leader of men.

Nepal, in his strong and able hands, had steadily progressed in every branch of her internal economy. Sir Chandra was too wise, and too good a judge of human nature and of his own co-religionists and compatriots, to force the pace or to rush prematurely into any scheme of reform. But he knew what he wanted and what reforms would really benefit the country, and with such ends in view he pressed forward steadily with his plans, gradually overcoming prejudice or antagonism, and following the line of least resistance. For a full and accurate account of his achievements I would refer the reader to my friend, the late Mr. Perceval Landon's great work, "Nepal," in two volumes, published just after the author's death in 1928.

Mr. Landon who, as mentioned in Chapter III, accompanied our Mission to Lhasa in 1904, and wrote such a detailed and vivid account of it in his book "Lhasa," became later equally interested in Nepal, and the Maharaja placed the archives of the State at his disposal, and gave him the fullest facilities for compiling his book. The book, in consequence, contains a mass of new information which is nowhere else available, and in especial it brings the history of Nepal up to date, treating most fully on the administration and achievements of the late Prime Minister, and on the memorable part which Nepal played as the friend and ally of Great Britain during the Great War.

Sir Chandra also, during his years as head of the State, pursued a sane and well-considered foreign policy. Whilst firmly maintaining Nepal's rights and sovereign integrity as an independent country, he carefully avoided friction with his neighbours, and steadily fostered and cemented Nepal's traditional friendship with Great Britain. How splendidly Nepal, under his guidance,

sprang to the help of England during and again immediately after the Great War I shall have occasion to describe lower down, and also how my very last official duty before finally quitting the country in 1925 was to exchange with the Maharaja the ratified copies of the Treaty which we had both signed on behalf of our respective Governments a year earlier.

Our meeting on this first occasion was merely in the nature of a preliminary canter. We had actually met once before at King Edward VII's garden-party at Windsor Castle in July 1906, and we had many reminiscences in common of the Tibetan campaign and of subsequent events whilst I was stationed as British Trade Agent at Gyantse. So we parted after a pleasant conversation—the precursor of many formal and informal interviews during the years to come.

During our interview the Maharaja was kind enough to invite me to a tiger shoot, which he proposed to organise in my honour and as an introduction to this sport as conducted in Nepal. The rendezvous was fixed for the 4th January, just to the north of his shooting lodge near the edge of the great Terai forest, which extends along the foot of the Himalayas for the whole length of Nepal from east to west—a distance of over 500 miles. I gave instructions to the Subadar of the escort to make all the necessary arrangements by the proper date, and, accompanied by two or three friends, I drove out along the unmetalled cart-track for some twenty miles or so to the edge of the forest, where we found the camp already pitched. The Maharaja with his suite was camped near-by.

Then followed the first of the many wonderful tiger shoots which I was to enjoy during my term of service in Nepal. The Nepalese method of hunting tigers is peculiar to the country, and I will describe it in detail in a later chapter. On this occasion no less than 130 ele-

phants were provided, and in fourteen days the bag amounted to eight tigers, six leopards, and one rhino, besides small game—deer, pea-fowl, jungle fowl, etc., etc.

It was a delightful experience; the weather in the Terai at this time of year is perfect—bright sunny days, not too hot, and cool nights. No mosquitoes, and the jungle scenery a continual joy. All these sub-Himalayan forests are composed almost exclusively of “sal” trees—a magnificent straight-stemmed timber—and generally speaking undergrowth is sparse, consisting chiefly of “sal” saplings a few feet high, and so the bulk of the forest is fairly open, and every step presents fresh vistas of beauty. But although this comparatively open “sal” jungle is the staple, there is besides every variety of tropical forest to be found—dense thickets of cane and thorn, grassy glades, and swampy places where the reeds rise 15 to 20 ft. in height. It was all such a change from the horrors and sordid worries of the last four years. But I shall have more to say about our tiger shooting farther on.

A few days later I went off to Delhi, to be present at the review by the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief of the Nepalese Contingent (regular troops of the Nepal army), before their return to their own country, after their services in India as our allies during the war.

It was a fine sight. The contingent numbered about 12,000 men, and was under the command of Generals Baber Sham Sher Jang and Padma Sham Sher Jang, and a finer body of men it would be difficult to find—typical, sturdy, little Gurkhas of the fighting races, perfectly drilled, disciplined, and equipped. The sight brought home to me what it meant to us to have such a strong and friendly little country as our neighbour on the northern frontier of India, and the Viceroy's words of thanks and appreciation were heartfelt and well merited.

I little thought, as I watched the regiments march past

on their farewell function before returning to Nepal, that within a few weeks their services in aid of the Indian Empire would again be called for, and that they would be marching down again to the plains of India for the second time.

The Maharaja by this time had returned to his Capital, and towards the end of February I made my first journey to Katmandu, in order to make my official appearance, and to attend the ceremonies customary on the arrival of a new Resident.

The journey in those days was no light undertaking. The total distance from railhead at Raxaul to Katmandu is seventy-five miles, which may be divided into three approximately equal sections.

The first, twenty-five miles level to the foot of the Himalayas. Of this section the first fifteen miles lie through a cultivated plain, and the next ten through the usual Terai forest.

In the second section the track enters the hills, and follows the courses of various hill streams, crossing some low spurs, and gradually rising for another twenty-five miles or so through picturesque mountain scenery to a hamlet called Bhimpedi. Up to this point bullock-carts can travel during the winter months (during the rains many sections of it are quite impracticable), and I even succeeded in driving my Ford car for this distance.

At this point the third section, which is the real crux of the journey, begins. Any kind of wheeled traffic now becomes quite impossible. During the next sixteen miles the track, a mere footpath, crosses two passes, 6,500 ft. and 7,400 ft. high, respectively, and between the two it follows the course of a mountain torrent, crossing it more than a dozen times by fords which are deep and dangerous during the rains.

The track over the passes, however, is the star-turn of this really remarkable high-road, and has to be seen to be



properly appreciated. It zigzags up or down, as the case may be, on the faces of almost precipitous hillsides, and the final descent of some 3,000 feet into the valley of Katmandu consists of a series of irregular stone steps of varying heights and widths, very steep, and after rain very slippery. The sturdy little hill ponies of the country can scramble up and down well enough, but it is really easier and safer for travellers to trust to their own feet.

Since my departure from Nepal the road has been much improved. A light railway runs from Raxaul to the foot of the hills. The worst stretches of the cart-road thence have been realigned and made permanent, and a ropeway has been constructed for the transportation of goods from Bhimpedi to Katmandu. But for travellers the last section remains the same as ever, and the only way to reach this secluded Capital is by means of the heartbreaking goat-track, up and down thousands of feet of steep mountain-side, and across the beds of mountain torrents.

Once in the valley of Katmandu all is plain sailing, and a good carriage road leads from the foot of the hill for the eight miles to the city.

Katmandu is a town of some 90,000 inhabitants, lying at an elevation of 4,500 ft. in the centre of a great level plain some thirty miles across, entirely surrounded by hills, with but one outlet by which the river Baghmati carries off the drainage of the valley to the plains of India—a very similar formation to the valley of Kashmir, drained by the Jhelum. The hills encircling the valley rise to some 8,000 to 9,000 ft., and in the background to the north stretches an almost unbroken line of majestic snowy peaks.

The climate is good during the spring and autumn, but there is a very heavy rainfall, and it is muggy and enervating during the summer months.

There are two other principal towns in the valley—Patan and Bhatgaon—both Capitals of small Kingdoms

in former days; and the whole place is a mine of archaeological and historical interest. These aspects of Nepal are outside the scope of my reminiscences, but they have been fully dealt with by the French savant, M. Sylvain Lévi, in his work, "Le Népal," and by the late Mr. Perceval Landon, in his "Nepal."

On this my first visit I spent only a few days in the valley. I was ceremoniously received and escorted through the country from the time of my arrival by emissaries from the Prime Minister, and was received by him personally on reaching the Capital. A day or two later we exchanged formal calls, and I presented my credentials at his Palace; and I was also received in audience by the young King, the Maharaja Dhiraja.

The formalities in connection with these receptions are of Indian origin, and are very similar to those followed in the Courts of the Indian States. They are conducted always with elaborate Oriental ceremony, and regulated by a strict programme and rigid etiquette. At a fixed hour representatives of high rank, from the Prime Minister, arrive at the Legation in carriages in full uniform, and are received by the Envoy and conducted to their seats in his reception-room; and after a brief formal conversation they are presented with "attar" (rose-water) and "pan" (betel nut). The rose-water is brought round by an attendant in a small ewer and sprinkled on the guests' handkerchiefs, and the betel nut, wrapped in a small packet of gold leaf, is handed to them, and generally placed in the handkerchief and concealed somewhere about the person.

The party then drives in State to the "Darbar" (reception) Hall, the Envoy and the senior members of the deputation in the leading carriage, followed in other carriages by the members of their staffs, and accompanied by a cavalry escort. At the entrance to the "Darbar" building the Prime Minister in person receives the

Envoy, and conducts him to his seat at the end of the Hall, the chief civil and military officials of the State being stationed in order of precedence to the right and left. Conversation and introductions follow, and on departure the Envoy and his staff receive the "attar" and "pan" from the hand of the Maharaja.

On the rare occasions when the King receives the Envoy, the procedure is similar, except that the Prime Minister comes in person to the Legation and conducts the guests to the Palace, and the King occupies his throne in the centre at the end of the Reception Hall. After shaking hands with His Majesty and a few words of welcome, the Envoy and the Prime Minister take their seats on his right hand, and the Commander-in-Chief and Chief Priest of the Nepal State on his left (see photograph), the remaining officials, as before, forming an avenue down the two sides of the Hall. A few purely formal complimentary remarks are exchanged, and on departure the King presents the "attar" and "pan" to the Envoy and his staff.

Katmandu, in spite of its secluded situation and apparent inaccessibility, possesses a number of really magnificent palaces and halls of audience. The custom of the country dictates that each Prime Minister should possess a palace of his own which, during his term of office, constitutes also the official headquarters and audience hall of the State.<sup>1</sup> And in addition he generally erects a palatial dwelling for each of his sons. Consequently, in the city and its immediate environs, there are a number, at least twenty, of vast blocks of buildings each capable of housing some hundreds of people, and elaborately decorated and furnished. The palace built by Sir Chandra, after becoming Prime Minister, is termed the "Singha Dar-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Chandra used humorously to refer to his palace, the Singha Darbar, as his "No. 10 Downing Street."



H M THE KING OF NEPAL WITH HIS FIRST TIGER



RECEPTION BY H M THE KING OF NEPAL, KATMANDU, 1925

H M in centre , Author and Prime Minister left , Commander in Chief (now Prime Minister),  
Chief Priest, right (Note portrait of Lord Kitchener )



bar," and it was here that he held his official receptions, and where, in November 1923, we signed the new Treaty between the two countries.

I may mention here that Sir Chandra by his will left this beautiful building as a permanent headquarters and Government offices for the use of the Prime Minister of the State.

The King's receptions took place in a much older palace situated in the city of Katmandu.

During this first visit to the Capital I also had the honour of attending the wedding of the Maharaja Dhiraja. The lad (he was then only twelve years of age) espoused two little Indian girls, sisters, and the ceremony lasted for two whole days, and included fireworks, feasting, and elephant processions, in one of which I took part—riding in a gorgeous howdah on a huge elephant with the Prime Minister through dense crowds of cheering and salaaming natives, all in gala holiday dress. I was also accorded a private glimpse of the two little brides, unveiled, before the conclusion of the ceremony, and I saw them drive off afterwards with their Royal Bridegroom, all three seated in a chariot—the King in the centre, with a little Queen on each side of him—*en route* to the Royal Palace close by.

I returned to the plains for another shoot in the Terai while the climate was still suitable—once the rains begin these jungles become uninhabitable for the white man and also for the Nepalese themselves, who all clear off up to their hills long before the monsoon sets in. Some friends from Calcutta, and one or two of the local planters, joined me, and we had the usual excellent sport, averaging over a tiger a day for ten days, with plenty of deer and small game thrown in; and about the middle of April I packed up my camp and returned to Katmandu for the summer.

But all this time, and just while the Nepalese troops

were returning to their own country for a well-deserved rest and leave, a storm was brewing in India and on the North-West Frontier, which was destined again to test the friendship of Nepal for Great Britain.

Before, however, relating the circumstances which led to the dispatch to India for the second time of troops of the regular Nepalese army, I will take this opportunity of giving some account of Nepal's services to us during the Great War.

As stated above, the Maharaja was a careful student of foreign politics, and he immediately recognised the serious import of the murder of the Archduke at Serajevo, and the possible consequences to the British Empire; and as early as the 3rd August, 1914, in a letter to the British Resident at Katmandu, he placed the whole military resources of his State at the disposal of His Majesty the King-Emperor. His offer was accepted, and in March 1915 a contingent of the Nepalese regular army, numbering some 7,500 men, and including four regiments of the Maharaja's personal bodyguard, proceeded to India; and these were followed in December by another detachment of 4,750 men—over 12,000 men in all—and during the years 1915–16–17–18 further drafts to the number of 2,500 men were dispatched to keep these contingents up to strength.

At the same time, he agreed that the number of the Gurkha battalions in India should be doubled for the period of the war, and between August 1914 and November 1918 no less than 55,000 Gurkhas were supplied by Nepal for these battalions, in addition to those sent for police, labour corps, and other units. In all it is estimated that over 200,000 men were furnished from Nepal during the course of the war.

Besides men the Nepalese Government contributed large sums of money and indigenous supplies, such as timber, tea, blankets, etc., as free gifts, and also presented

thirty-one Vickers-Maxim guns for the use of the British Forces; whilst the Maharaja himself subscribed with princely liberality, from his private purse, to hospitals and various war funds.

It was, in fact, a magnificent contribution from so small and, from the European point of view, so poor a country, and the intrinsic value of these contributions was immensely enhanced by the generous and ungrudging spirit in which they were made. Nepal lay under no obligation, either contractual or moral, to come to the assistance of Great Britain in her time of trouble; but the Prime Minister did not hesitate for a moment. The friendship which had for so long existed between the two countries represented to him something more than a mere sentiment. It was a tradition which in the past had more than once been translated into action—as, for instance, in the case of the dispatch of Nepalese troops at the time of the Mutiny by Sir Chandra's great predecessor, Jang Bahadur—and Sir Chandra was ready to pursue a similar policy. He asked for nothing in return—no guarantees or pledges or reward—but he unreservedly and spontaneously placed the manhood and resources of his country at our disposal. It was an action almost without parallel in international affairs, and it is one which can never be forgotten by the English race.

I have described above how the Nepalese troops on the termination of the war were reviewed by the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief at Delhi, and returned to their own country. Scarcely had they left Indian territory, however, when serious internal troubles arose in the Punjab and elsewhere in British India, which culminated, as we all know, in the Jalianwala Bagh incident at Amritsar on the 13th April. So serious, indeed, was the situation that I was instructed by the Indian Government to approach the Prime Minister to ascertain whether he would be prepared to sanction the dispatch to India



of a fresh contingent of Nepalese troops should the Indian Government find that their own resources were insufficient to deal with the emergency.

It was rather a delicate mission. The troops had only just arrived at the Capital amidst scenes of rejoicing, and only a few days before I had been present at some ceremonies in celebration of their safe return. Some of the men had already gone off on leave to their homes and families, which most of them had not seen for several years, and the rest were preparing to follow.

The Prime Minister, however, faced the difficult situation with his usual courage and energy, and he at once expressed himself as ready and willing to do all that lay in his power to meet the wishes of the Indian Government; but he said that, in the peculiar circumstances of the case, it would be advisable to prepare the way rather carefully before any public announcement was made or any orders issued to the troops. His Highness, therefore, first summoned a meeting of his General Council, and, having secured their goodwill and co-operation, he then made a personal address to the troops, explaining to them the urgency of the case, and why it was necessary to call upon them for further exertions and sacrifices.

His personal influence and authority, as usual, prevailed, and although there was some natural disappointment, all ranks were prepared to defer their leave and to return to India on duty. Orders were accordingly given deferring demobilisation and leave permits, and a strong contingent was held in readiness to march at a moment's notice.

Meanwhile, however, the immediate crisis in India had passed. The Government had the situation well in hand, and it looked as if, after all, we might be able to dispense with Nepal's help. But a few days later, early in May, fresh trouble arose, this time on the North-West Frontier. The new Amir, Aman-ullah-Khan, who had

succeeded his father, Habib-ullah-Khan, on the murder of the latter a year earlier, made a sudden and totally unjustifiable attack on the Khyber Pass, and the Indian Government found itself involved in a new Afghan war. It was fortunate that this fresh trouble had not coincided with the crisis in the Punjab, but even as it was, the position of affairs was serious enough, and I was again instructed to approach the Prime Minister and to ask for his support.

The troops were ready, and it was all the same to them whether they went to fight Afghans or to quell unruly Indians. Their final preparations were soon made and, a few days later, a contingent of 2,000 picked men marched down the road to the plains of India, and were at once sent up to the North-West Frontier, and preparations were made for the dispatch of further troops, as and when required. But the Afghan War fizzled out as suddenly as it had begun, and in due course the contingent returned to Nepal.

The incident was terminated, but it remains significant. Once again Nepal had given practical proof of her disinterested friendship for Great Britain, and we had had a further demonstration of the value to our Indian Empire of so strong and friendly a neighbour.

The British and Indian Governments were naturally anxious to show their appreciation of Nepal's services during and after the war in some substantial form, and by a special recognition of Sir Chandra's personal support and attitude. The Prime Minister was already an honorary Lieut.-General in the British Army and held the decorations of honorary G.C.B., G.C.S.I., and G.C.V.O. He was now accorded the further distinction of an honorary full Generalship in the British Army, and the G.C.M.G., and the Government decided that henceforth he should be addressed by the title of "Highness."

The question of a more substantial reward, one which should be of permanent benefit to Nepal as a whole, was more difficult to decide upon. After the Mutiny, when Nepalese troops had assisted us to quell the mutineers and to restore order in India, the Indian Government had returned to Nepal large tracts of land lying along the foot of the hills in the United Provinces and Behar, which had originally belonged to Nepal, but which had been confiscated on the termination of the war of 1814-15. These territories had since proved to be most valuable from the revenue-paying point of view, and the Prime Minister made no secret of the fact that the most acceptable form which any reward to Nepal for her services to us could take would be in the nature of a similar transfer of territory.

But it was, unfortunately, out of the question to meet his wishes in this respect. At the time of the Mutiny the districts in question lay mostly in the territory of rebellious Chiefs or Rajahs, and had not been included in the land settlement of British India proper, and their transference to Nepal had presented no particular difficulty and had involved no breach of faith with the inhabitants. But since 1858 the whole of the border districts had been subject to a regular land settlement, and the Government of India could not very well agree to transfer to another country districts which, for over half a century, had formed an integral part of British India, without the consent of the population and of the other interested parties.

I discussed the whole matter in all its bearings with the Prime Minister, and it was finally decided that our recognition of Nepal's services should take the form of a monetary present of 10 lakhs (i.e. one million) of rupees—£75,000 at the present rate of exchange—to be paid annually and unconditionally in perpetuity so long as friendly relations exist between the two Governments.

The discussion of these and numerous other matters of mutual interest occupied the summer months of 1919 at Katmandu, and I had the opportunity of exploring the valley and of making the acquaintance of the leading personalities at the Capital.

Social relations with orthodox Hindus of high caste are naturally of a more restricted nature than is the case with Muhammadans, Buddhists, or indeed any other people in the world. I have already described in these reminiscences the pleasant social functions which were possible with my Tibetan and Persian friends, but in Nepal such opportunities were much fewer and our relations more formal. The most usual form of social entertainment, for instance, namely, that of eating and drinking together, was utterly "taboo," as none of our high caste friends could partake of our food or drink, or invite us to share theirs.

But, apart from this, our relations were of the friendliest. The most prominent persons in Nepal are the members of the great "Rana" family, which provided the first famous Prime Minister, Jang Bahadur, and in whose ranks the office of Prime Minister is hereditary—as indeed are, in practice, most of the high offices of State. His Highness himself I saw regularly, and I made the acquaintance of most of the members of his family—his brother, the Commander-in-Chief Bhim Sham Sher Jang, now Prime Minister, his sons, nephews, etc. They are all highly educated and cultured men of the world, all, like the Prime Minister himself, speaking English fluently and interested in world affairs and politics. The Maharaja's own sons (he had nine) were frequent visitors at the Residency, where we played tennis, billiards, etc.

I got to know best the three eldest.

The first, General Mohun Sham Sher Jang, was in charge of the Prime Minister's Palace, and responsible

for all his domestic and social arrangements—a most courteous and considerate host and master of the ceremonies.

General Baber Sham Sher Jang, the second son, had accompanied the Nepalese contingent to India in the capacity of Inspector-General, and during the period of service of the contingent in India he was attached to Army Headquarters, where he displayed great ability and good sense, and won the respect and liking of all with whom he was brought into contact.

General Kaiser, the third son, is at once a great hunter and a student. It is he who arranges the big shoots for distinguished guests, and who was responsible for the organisation of the Prince of Wales's shoot in 1921; and in his Palace at Katmandu he has amassed an excellent library. It was really rather surprising, in this remote and almost inaccessible mountain Capital, to find oneself in a thoroughly up-to-date library, which comprised not only the more usual works of reference, history, biography, etc., but also a selection of the latest works of fiction, all supervised by a host who was himself an omnivorous reader and who thoroughly appreciated what he read.

I found the climate of Katmandu during the summer months enervating and unhealthy. Rain falls daily from May till October, and although the floor of the valley lies at an elevation of over 4,500 ft., it is surrounded by hills like a bowl; the air is heavy and saturated with moisture, and mosquitoes abound. I was always glad when autumn arrived, and it was time to move down to the plains. The Prime Minister himself made a practice of having a winter tour in the Terai, where he moved about from place to place camping and shooting; and it is customary for the Envoy also to leave Katmandu, and to pass the winter months in camp, partly in Nepalese territory and partly in the British districts bordering on Nepal.

I used to make my winter headquarters in the district of Champaran, just across the Nepal border, where I made many friends among the planting community, and enjoyed most excellent sport of all kinds—pig-sticking, small-game shooting, polo, etc.

And so my first year in Nepal passed peacefully and quietly—a pleasant change after the turmoil and adventures of the last few years. Early in 1920 I was ordered to headquarters on special duty with the Government of India, and spent a year at Simla and Delhi—too commonplace an experience to need any special description. The summer of 1921 I spent on leave in England, and I returned to Nepal in the autumn in time to prepare for the visit of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales.

During my absence it had been decided to change the denomination of the "Resident in Nepal" to "British Envoy at the Court of Nepal," and the "Residency" henceforth became the "Legation."

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## CHAPTER XV

### BRITISH ENVOY IN NEPAL

(1921-1925)

#### PRINCE OF WALES'S VISIT TO NEPAL, 1921

I RETURNED to India in October 1921, and my first duty after paying my respects to the Prime Minister at Katmandu was to visit the proposed site of the Prince of Wales's shooting camp, and to acquaint myself with the various arrangements which were in progress for the entertainment of H.R.H. and his staff.

The chosen spot was just across the Nepal Frontier from the little wayside station of Bhikna Thori, the terminus of a branch line originally constructed for the carriage of timber from the Nepal forests. The forests reached by this little line are carefully preserved by the Government of Nepal, and contain some of the finest big-game shooting in the world—chiefly tiger and rhinoceros. The forest is entered immediately the frontier is crossed, and it extends east and west for hundreds of miles, with an average depth of some ten to twelve miles to the outer slopes of the mountains. It swarms with tigers throughout, but rhinos are found only (there are a few scattered specimens elsewhere) in a special preserve situated some thirty miles to the west of Bhikna Thori.

It was in this district that His Majesty King George V shot during his visit to Nepal in December 1911. A special shooting box was constructed for his use in the

heart of this enclave on the banks of the river Rapti, and here H.M. and party enjoyed wonderful sport, and bagged thirty-seven tigers, eighteen rhinos, and four bears in ten days. As that particular area, however, was rather damp and inclined to be feverish, it was decided on this occasion to make the Prince's camp in a healthier locality, and a site had been selected just across the frontier from Bhikna Thori.

It was a beautiful spot—a small plateau, at the junction of two streams, studded with great “sal” trees—thick forest all round, and a glimpse of the snowy range of the Himalayas in the far distance to the north. The site had been cleared of undergrowth, and a strong palisade built all round it to keep out wild elephants and other beasts. The tents of the European guests, forty-nine in number, were pitched in a long crescent facing north towards the snows, and behind them lay the kitchens, supply stores, and the smaller tents and shelters of the servants and camp followers.

A camp of this size is no small undertaking. Apart from the European guests, provision had to be made for the innumerable hangers-on of an Indian establishment—servants of different castes and religions—Hindus, Muhammadans, and Christians; and amongst the Hindus the various castes had to be differentiated and separately provided for. And in the catering every variety of taste and custom had to be taken into account, ranging from the Prince and his staff to the needs of the humblest “sweeper” or “water-carrier.”

Then there were the questions of water-supply, conservancy, and lighting. Water had to be conducted to the camp by pipes from a considerable distance, and every drop used in the camp had to be boiled and filtered before consumption. For lighting a special plant was brought from Calcutta, and the whole camp was brilliantly lighted up at night by arc lamps dotted here and there, and an



elaborate system of wiring carried the current into every tent, store, kitchen, etc. The effect of this illumination at night in the depths of this primeval jungle can be imagined: the contrast between the brightness and activity within the camp—a band playing military and operatic music, servants running to and fro, etc.—with the darkness of the forest outside—the silence broken only at intervals by the roar of a distant tiger or the trumpeting of an elephant.

And besides the main camp, with its multifarious needs, there were subsidiary camps—that of the Nepalese escort provided by the Prime Minister as a Royal Guard; the elephant camps, of which there were three, each containing about 150 elephants; and close by, but separate from the Prince's camp, the camp of the Prime Minister and his family and staff.

The Prince, of course, during his visit to Nepal was the guest of the Nepal State, and the responsibility for all these arrangements, and for his safety whilst in Nepalese territory, fell upon the Nepalese Government. The Prime Minister, whilst acquainting himself with every important detail, entrusted the actual laying out of the camp to his second son, Sir Baber Sham Sher Jang, and the shooting arrangements were organised by the third son, Sir Kaiser Sham Sher Jang. These latter arrangements also were of a most elaborate nature. For weeks beforehand all the jungles within thirty or forty miles of the camp had been kept clear of intruders, and herds of buffaloes had been driven slowly in towards the camp from outlying districts, halting for a day or two to give tigers an opportunity of killing and eating their prey, and then resuming their march so that all available tigers within a wide range should be congregated within the shooting limit.

Two rough tracks—but good enough to be used by motors—had been made through the forest, extending

some thirty miles in a westerly, and seven or eight miles in an easterly direction, and thirty-two miles of telephone wire had been laid down. Over 400 elephants were collected, and were disposed in three camps at suitable distances from the centre. These outlying camps were all connected by telephone with the main camp, and it was thus possible for messages to be telephoned every morning to the main camp giving news of the number and location of any "kills" which had been made during the night, or of the proximity of rhinos or other big game; and parties could then be arranged for the day according to the "khabbar" (news) received, and the guests could ride or motor out to where the elephants were awaiting them.

I was soon satisfied that everything that was humanly possible had been, and was being done to ensure the comfort of, and good sport for, H.R.H.; but as I had had a good deal of experience of this kind of shooting myself by this time, I realised that for an active young man, sitting on the back of an elephant for hours, even with the excitement of shooting an occasional tiger as an incentive, was apt to become rather wearisome. I knew, besides, the Prince's love of riding, and so I arranged to have a suitable piece of ground, just across the frontier in British territory, cleared and levelled as a polo ground, and I collected a few ponies and the necessary sticks and balls, so that H.R.H. might indulge in a little polo practice now and then if so inclined.

All these extensive preparations were duly completed, and at 10 a.m. on the 14th December the royal train steamed into the tiny station of Bhikna Thori, where we were all assembled on the platform—the Maharaja with his sons and other high officers of State, and myself with my small staff. After the usual greetings and introductions we drove in motors across the river-bed, which here constitutes the frontier, and entered Nepalese terri-

tory. The Prince inspected the Nepalese guard of honour *en route*, and we drove on into the camp close by. News of four kills from different centres had already arrived, and I explained to the Prince the *modus operandi*, and the Nepalese system of "ringing" tigers. He approved of all the proposed arrangements, but said that whilst very keen to shoot a tiger, he wished to make it quite clear from the start that he wanted no preference shown to himself, but insisted that every member of the party should have exactly the same chances, and that the shoot should be conducted on thoroughly sportsmanlike lines.

Instructions to this effect were accordingly issued to all concerned—the only stipulation being that it should be arranged for H R H. himself to shoot the first tiger, as a compliment to his hosts, and as an auspicious beginning to the shoot. This was agreed to, and in a few minutes three parties were on their way to the scenes of action, and by evening four tigers had been bagged—one of them by the Prince.

Then followed a week of great activity. The weather as usual at this time of year was perfect and game abundant. Every morning news came by telephone of several kills, and parties were made up at breakfast time to go after one or other of the tigers or to try for a rhino. Some of the kills might be close at hand, others perhaps twenty to thirty miles away, entailing a drive along the rough unmetalled road through perfect forest scenery all the way, up and down the tree-clad slopes, and crossing small streams by temporary bridges.

I generally drove the Prince in my (now) old-fashioned four-cylinder Essex tourer, which took the rough tracks very steadily, and once or twice he drove me in his Crossley—one of a fleet which accompanied him on his tour. Somewhere on the road "pad" elephants would be waiting. Everyone would then mount on his pad, and the procession would go swinging its way in single file

through the forest to join the main body of the elephants near to where the tiger was supposed to be. The tiger would then be ringed according to the Nepalese method (which will be described in fuller detail in the next chapter), the guns would change from their pads on to howdah elephants, and the biggest and bravest available tusker would be taken into the ring to stir up the tiger.

This generally did not take very long. The tiger would charge the ring, occasionally breaking through, but more frequently returning to shelter when he saw the elephants and was fired at. More than once I have seen a tiger, or tigress, spring right up on an elephant's head and cling for a few moments to his trunk and cheeks, claws dug deeply in, snarling and trying to bite the huge beast, whilst the elephant shook his great head violently from side to side, striving to shake off the tiger and kneel on him; and the mahout, safely seated on the elephant's neck, and shielded by the enormous skull and ears, would lean over and strike at the tiger with his "kukri." Whilst all around a deafening din was set up—shouts, whistles, and the trumpeting and squealing of the elephants. Sometimes it might take an hour or two before the tiger was finally bagged; sometimes he might fall to the first shot.

We had only one occasion for any anxiety during the week. On the second day out we had mounted our howdah elephants and were moving along through some rather thick jungle towards the place where a tiger was supposed to be lying up, and on the way had to cross a small patch of swampy ground, some thirty to forty yards across. It did not appear very deep or dangerous, and the first few elephants got across all safe—their great feet sinking into the mud a foot or two and being pulled out with a resounding "plonk"—like the drawing of gigantic corks.

But the Prince was mounted on a very big and heavy tusker, which, about half-way across the swamp, became completely bogged—could not get his feet out of the mire—and began to sink, and to sway himself from side to side in his efforts to extricate himself. Besides the Prince, there were his two invariable attendants on the back seat of the howdah, and all three were swung violently to and fro as the big beast struggled to get free.

It was not a pleasant sight to see. The great, terrified mammoth sunk to his belly in a black morass, plunging and swinging with ungainly heaves and jerks—his trunk reaching out vainly to try and grasp something solid—and the Heir Apparent to the English Throne tossed hither and thither like a puppet on top of it all in his flimsy howdah. Indeed, so violent were the beast's struggles, that it looked as if all three occupants of the howdah must be thrown out on to the mud, in which case we knew that the elephant would probably seize and trample on them.

There was confused shouting from both banks, where the other elephants were collected, and in a minute or two a smaller pad elephant was driven by its mahout alongside the big tusker. Owing to his smaller weight and load his feet only sank a few inches into the mire, and we watched with anxious suspense whilst the Prince and his two attendants climbed over the edge of their howdah and made a precarious landing on to the smaller beast. It was a difficult and dangerous acrobatic feat—like transferring passengers from a sinking ship to a small boat in a stormy sea—but to our intense relief it was safely accomplished, and the small elephant waded safely out of the bog with his precious freight. The Prince was perfectly cool and calm—much more so than any of the spectators—and made light of it all; but all the same, it was a nasty experience, and we were thankful that it ended so well.

The tusker, relieved of some of the weight on his back, was able gradually to make his way to firm ground, and got safely out of the morass.

On another occasion, I was with the Prince when he shot his first rhino. A big male had been spotted overnight some seven or eight miles from the camp, and a small party was chosen to follow him. Rhinos are sluggish beasts, and unless frightened they amble slowly about in their favourite haunts, browsing on reeds and grasses, and wallowing for hours in muddy pools. The Prince went ahead on his howdah-elephant with his heavy rifle all ready. I followed just behind, and Generals Mohun, Baber and Kaiser, too, were with us. As we neared the spot where the rhino had been last seen, we found native scouts perched on trees, who were keeping an eye on him, and who silently pointed out which way he had gone. We pushed on as quietly as possible (it is marvellous how quietly a great beast like an elephant can move through the forest when going slowly) until we could see a dusky form moving in a leisurely way through the thicket just in front, and not more than twenty or thirty yards away.

The best way to make sure of killing the rhino is by means of a shot through the neck, and so the Prince had to bide his time till the chance of a side-shot presented itself. Presently the rhino got suspicious, or heard some sound behind him—he half-turned, and the Prince got his shot in. The beast dashed off—General Baber firing a couple of shots into him as he went—ran a few yards, then crashed, and fell dead.

On examining him, we found that the Prince's bullet had been well placed and had killed him. He was a fine specimen. The photographs on the frontispiece and facing page 302, taken a few minutes later, are not very good ones, but a rhino is a difficult subject to manoeuvre into position in a small forest glade so as to get the light on to him, and after all our efforts his head still remains rather

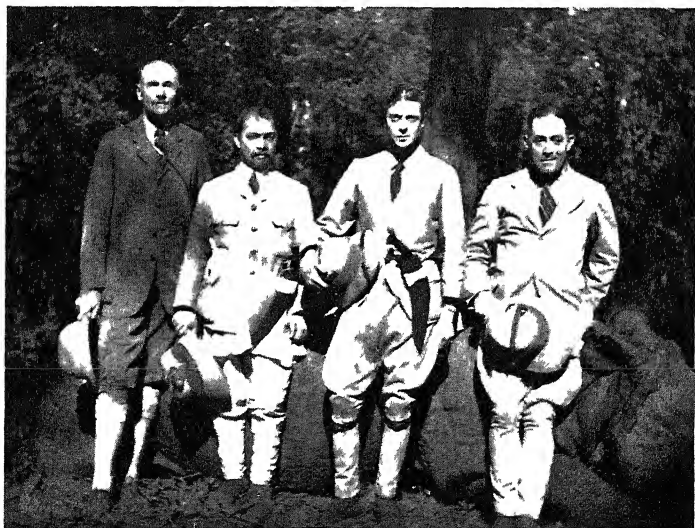
in obscurity. It will be noticed that the Prince is wearing a Gurkha kukri, the weapon carried by practically every male Nepali, and invaluable in the jungle.

But we had other kinds of sport besides the big-game shooting. Our day's programme was somewhat as follows: up at seven and across the frontier to the polo-ground, and an hour's polo practice before breakfast. Both the ground and the ponies were pretty rough, but they were good enough for knocking the ball about, and the Prince was anxious to keep his hand in in preparation for some matches in which he was to play at Calcutta and elsewhere. Back to camp for breakfast, and after that generally a short wait until news of tiger-kills and of rhinos came in from the various outlying points. As soon as all the reports were in, the parties—generally three—were arranged for the day, and all set out to their different destinations. The Prince, as a rule, did not go very far afield, and his party had generally disposed of their tiger or rhino by 3 or 4 p.m. In such cases, we used to hurry back to camp, change our rifles for shot-guns, and off again across the frontier into British territory. Here the country was more open—rice-fields and small patches of jungle and swamp—just the country for small-game shooting. Mr. McNamara, the local police officer, would have beaters, etc., ready for us at the rendezvous, and in a few minutes a line would be made, and we would be striding across-country—the Prince, one or two of his staff, McNamara, and myself—shooting anything we came across—black partridges, hares, snipe, pea-fowl, etc. It was great fun and good exercise, and a welcome chance to stretch our legs after some hours on elephant-back. And at dusk we would ride back again to camp in time for dinner.

We had one quite exciting little adventure on one of these informal shoots. We were walking along in line through a patch of jungle—the Prince on my right with



PART OF A RING WITH TIGER IN CENTRE



H R H THE PRINCE OF WALES AND HIS RHINOCEROS

*Left to right* Author Gen Sir Kaiser Sham Sher Jang, H R H , Captain Dudley North  
302]





half a dozen native beaters between us—when I heard him fire two shots, and thus was followed by excited shouts from the beaters, and the Prince called to me to come and see what he had shot. I ran up, and found him with a dead snake, some 10 ft. long. It appeared that he had seen the snake gliding away through the brushwood, and had fired at it, whereupon it had turned, and was making for him at full speed, when he shot it dead within a few yards of himself with his second barrel.

There is only one snake found in India which attacks human beings, namely the poisonous King Cobra or Hamadryad. It is not very common, and during all my years in India I had never even seen, far less been attacked by one. We took the snake back to camp, where it was examined by our expert zoologist, Mr. Ellison, who pronounced it to be a Hamadryad measuring 10 ft 3 in. It was really an extraordinary chance that the Prince should have been attacked by and have shot one of these deadly and pugnacious reptiles on foot during his one week in the Indian jungles—an adventure which might not come once in a lifetime spent in the country—and it was fortunate that he shot so straight.

One afternoon, feeling specially energetic, we organised a football match—the Prince's staff versus "the rest"—H R.H. playing centre-forward for his side and kicking a goal.

The camp was very well and comfortably arranged and furnished. The tents were pitched in a long crescent, the Prince's two in the centre, with two big mess tents for dining- and sitting-rooms. There was electric light in every tent, big arc lamps lighting the whole camp. At one side was a strongly built square wooden structure, some 30 ft. high, with a platform at the top, intended as a refuge in the event of the camp being invaded at night by wild elephants, which abounded in the neighbouring

jungle. This was generally known as the "funk-machan."

Every evening, during and after dinner, massed Nepalese regimental bands, some seventy strong, played outside the mess tent, and two of the regimental pipers regularly made their appearance towards the close of dinner, and perambulated the table piping vigorously on orthodox bagpipes in the traditional Highland fashion. And we were also entertained nearly every evening by folk singers and dancers of the country, and by exhibitions of the Gurkhas' skill with the kukri, etc. The Prime Minister also presented to H.R.H. a collection of Nepalese birds and beasts, which were all brought up to the camp one afternoon and inspected by the Prince. The collection was afterwards presented by H.R.H. to the Zoological Gardens in London. And at the same time, the Maharaja presented a collection of typical Nepalese arts and crafts—metal-work, embroideries, gold-mounted kukris, etc., etc.

In fact, the Prince's hosts did everything that was humanly possible to make the camp a success, and to cater for the sport and comfort of their Royal Guest. Throughout they showed themselves as past-masters in the highest art of hospitality. Whilst neglecting no detail, however apparently unimportant, they were careful never to obtrude their attentions, and the camp was conducted, from start to finish, with a delightful spirit of informality. It was a real "shikar" camp, and everyone came and went as they pleased, and each day's programme was arranged to suit the taste and humour of each guest on that particular day. If he wanted to shoot a tiger or a rhino, he could have his choice; or if he preferred small-game shooting or a quiet day in camp, he might please himself. There were no politics and no ceremonies.

The Prime Minister himself was not in very good

health at the time, and was not able to take part in the actual shooting expeditions, but he was in every respect the embodiment of the courteous considerate host, anxious only that all his guests should enjoy their stay in his country, each in his own fashion, and should carry away a pleasant impression of Nepal and its people. He was, besides, well represented by his sons and other members of the Rana family. Generals Mohun, Baber and Kaiser were in constant attendance on the Prince in all his expeditions—whether on foot, on horseback, or on elephants—and being experienced sportsmen themselves, the whole huge organisation went like clockwork.

This informal country-house spirit was just what was wanted, and was much appreciated by the Prince and his staff. It is no secret that in India the political atmosphere at the time of his visit was not of the most propitious nature, and certain incidents which had occurred at Bombay and elsewhere had made an unpleasant impression; and in British India, besides, it was impossible to avoid a certain amount of social and other ceremonial. But once across the border of the Kingdom of Nepal, all this was left behind, and the Prince was able to forget affairs of State for the time being, and to enjoy himself as the guest of a foreign potentate in quite unconventional surroundings.

I remember one morning, as we were driving through the forest, on our way to some reported kill, the Prince suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, there's a British soldier in uniform. What on earth is he doing here? Stop and let's speak to him."

So I pulled up and called to the man, who came running up. He was one of a party of Sappers who had been deputed to erect and look after the telephone lines. The Prince was delighted to find a British soldier in such an out-of-the-way spot, and had a long chat with him; they found that they had been on the same part of the

French front at the same time, and on parting the Prince shook hands warmly with him.

It was, perhaps, a trivial incident, but it was typical. As we drove along afterwards, the Prince appeared moved and touched. He explained to me that during the war he had had opportunities such as probably had never before been afforded to the Heir to the Throne of seeing the British soldier in all sorts of conditions and circumstances, and how he sympathised with and admired him. He had seen the men in the filth and wet and cold and misery of the trenches and under fire, and, most pathetic of all, when, after a spell of leave at home and decent food and warmth and family life, they were on their way back to the front again. And he related to me individual cases of hardship which he had come across, and of the revolt of all a man's natural human instinct against returning to such a nightmare existence. He knew from his own personal experience what the men had suffered, and how they had stood up under it all. He could never forget it, and his heart went out to every British soldier whenever and wherever he saw one.

There were tears in his eyes as he spoke. Most human beings, I suppose, are more or less selfish, and insensitive to other people's misfortunes, and it is difficult for anyone bred and brought up in regal or, indeed, ordinarily prosperous surroundings to appreciate the troubles and difficulties of others less fortunately placed; but the Prince had seen these things for himself. He had lived with the men at a time when the veil was lifted, and he could see the raw and ugly side of life, and his sympathy and understanding were very genuine and human.

In the shooting field we all admired his unselfishness and sporting attitude. I have already related how almost the first thing he said to me on coming into camp was that he insisted that everyone should have an

equal chance, and that there should be no favouritism to himself. And he took good care to see that his instructions were carried out. I remember one occasion when the ring had been formed round a tiger and all the guns placed ready for the beating up to begin. The Prince had a shrewd suspicion that his hosts had (naturally, perhaps) posted him in the best place, and just before the signal was given for the big tusker to enter the ring, to stir up the tiger, he called out to one of the party on the opposite side of the ring to come and take his place, and he had his own elephant moved round to the other's stand, where, it must be admitted, the chances of a shot were very slight.

Much as he enjoyed the excitement of shooting tigers and rhinos off elephants, I think he really found almost as much amusement in our little tramps across-country on foot—wading streams, pushing through briers and undergrowth, and shooting at anything we came across. He was delighted, too, with his adventure with the King Cobra which I have related above, and he said to me afterwards that he would sooner have shot that snake on foot than any number of tigers off an elephant.

Well, our week in the jungle slipped away very quickly. What with "bumble-puppy" polo before breakfast, tigers and rhinos before lunch, and small-game shooting before dinner, the time seemed to fly. On the 21st December, the last day of the camp, we had our usual busy programme—polo, tigers, small-game—and at 6 p.m. we all assembled at the little station, last "Good-byes" were said, and the royal train steamed off, carrying the Prince and his staff to Patna, and so to Calcutta, and to continue their world tour.

The total bag for the eight days' shooting (not including small-game) consisted of seventeen tigers, two leopards, two bears, eight rhinos, and two rhinos afterwards found dead.

## ANGLO-NEPALESE TREATY OF 1923

It was during the Prince's visit that the question of a new Treaty between Great Britain and Nepal was first mooted. Our official relations with Nepal were regulated by the provisions of the Treaty of Segauli, which had been concluded in the year 1815 just after the termination of the war between the two countries (which event, by the way, is also commemorated by the "Ochterlony Monument" on the Maidan at Calcutta, erected in honour of the General of that name who commanded the British troops in the campaign).

This Treaty and certain subsequent agreements had served their purpose very well for a long period. Their provisions were still in force and were operating satisfactorily; and although there was, in fact, no actual necessity for superseding or adding to them, there were, nevertheless, certain matters which required clearer definition; and in especial, there was a feeling on both sides that the conclusion of a new Treaty would set a fitting seal on the close friendship which had bound the two countries during the Great War, and would give Great Britain the opportunity of recognising clearly and unequivocally the complete independence of Nepal.

This latter point was, indeed, one to which the Prime Minister and all Nepalese subjects attached the very highest importance. Although, no doubt, Nepal's status as a sovereign State was implicit in the Treaty of Segauli, and although her independence had never actually been called in question or challenged, certain incidents had occurred in the past (which need not be particularised here) which had given cause for some anxiety on the part of the Nepalese Government, and there still existed a good deal of public misapprehension regarding the true status of the country. There was a not unnatural tendency in the public mind to compare Nepal with the so-

called "Native States" of British India, which are, of course, feudatories of the British Crown; and the existence in the Indian Army of so many units of Gurkha troops tended to foster this impression. It was therefore desirable to dispel any such mistaken idea once and for all, and to place the true position of affairs beyond a doubt.

Under instructions, therefore, from the Government of India, I held a preliminary discussion with the Prime Minister, and finding that his views coincided with those of the Government, I prepared a tentative draft of an agreement which henceforward constituted a basis for negotiation. These negotiations were actually set on foot, as stated above, in December 1921, during the Prince of Wales's visit, and the Treaty was finally signed on the 21st December, 1923, exactly two years later. The text of the Treaty will be found in Appendix B, at the end of this book, and it will be seen that it is a short and apparently quite simple and straightforward document, which, on the face of it, might have been drawn up and agreed to by the two High Contracting Parties in the course of a few weeks. But there were, as a matter of fact, certain points both of principle and of detail involved which required very careful consideration, and the weighing of literally every single word; and cases actually occurred when the negotiations were held up for weeks at a time pending a decision regarding one particular word.

And besides, there was no need for haste. The existing Treaty had held good for over a century, and its provisions still covered the ground sufficiently well for all practical purposes, and it was best that the terms of the new Treaty should be thoroughly thrashed out and couched in terms which will, it may be hoped, enable it to serve its purpose as well as did its predecessor. So the whole matter was conducted with due and dignified



deliberation, and advantage was taken of the opportunity for discussing frankly and fully every aspect of every question which seemed likely ever to arise as between the two countries.

However, by December 1923, the last drafts had been formally approved by the two Governments concerned, a Nepalese version of the text had been prepared, and the date for actual formal signature was fixed for the 21st of the month.

In the world-wide affairs of the British Empire this event did not loom very large or excite any particular public interest or attention, but to us on the spot, who knew the history of Nepal's relations with Great Britain and what her help had meant to us so often in the past, and who realised the importance of the Gurkha Regiments in the Indian Army, the conclusion of this "Treaty of Friendship" meant a good deal. Although the Treaty does not constitute an offensive-defensive alliance, it is, nevertheless, so framed as to ensure close and friendly co-operation between Great Britain and Nepal, and it is a practical assurance for the continuance of existing arrangements regarding recruitment for our Gurkha Regiments—a very important matter indeed. And certain possible sources of friction (such, for example, as the question of the importation by Nepal of munitions of war through British India, have been cleared up.

At any rate, the signature of the Treaty was a great occasion for Nepal, and preparations were made to celebrate it with due ceremony. A formal deputation of high Nepalese officials presented itself at the Legation on the morning of the 21st December, and I was escorted by them through cheering crowds to the Prime Minister's Palace, the "Singha Darbar," a royal salute of thirty-one guns being fired as we drove along. A guard of honour presented arms on our arrival, and I was received at the entrance by the Prime Minister himself, and conducted

by him to the great reception hall, where were assembled all the chief civil and military dignitaries of the kingdom. The Treaty was read aloud in English and Nepali, duplicate copies in both languages were signed by the Maharaja and myself, and we each made a short speech. A salute of nineteen guns was then fired, and after the customary presentation of "attar" and "pan," I was escorted back to the Legation.

This was the second time that I had been associated with the signature of a Treaty with one of India's independent neighbours—the first with Tibet at the Potala Palace at Lhasa in September 1904, as described in Chapter III, and now with Nepal at Katmandu in December 1923—and I felt that it was a suitable conclusion to so many years' official association with this part of the Indian frontier.

The circumstances of the two cases were, it is true, widely different. In Tibet we had encountered hostility and opposition, and had had to force our way with an armed Mission to the Capital; whereas in the case of Nepal we were merely setting our seal to a long history of friendly co-operation. But the important factor in both instances is the same: namely, that we have stabilised friendly relations, and have averted, it is to be hoped indefinitely, all possible sources of friction and misunderstanding. And it is pleasant to recall now that the Tibetan Government, which was so bitterly opposed to our Mission when we first entered their country, actually volunteered to send troops to assist us in the Great War; and amongst the congratulations which I personally received on the conclusion of the Nepal Treaty I value highly a telegram dispatched to me from Lhasa by the Dalai Lama.

It only remains to add that the copies of the Treaty were duly signed by Their Majesties, the King-Emperor of Great Britain and the King of Nepal, and that the ratified copies were exchanged, again with all due ceremony,

at Katmandu on the 8th April, 1925—the last official ceremony of my thirty years' service on and beyond the frontiers of India (see photograph).

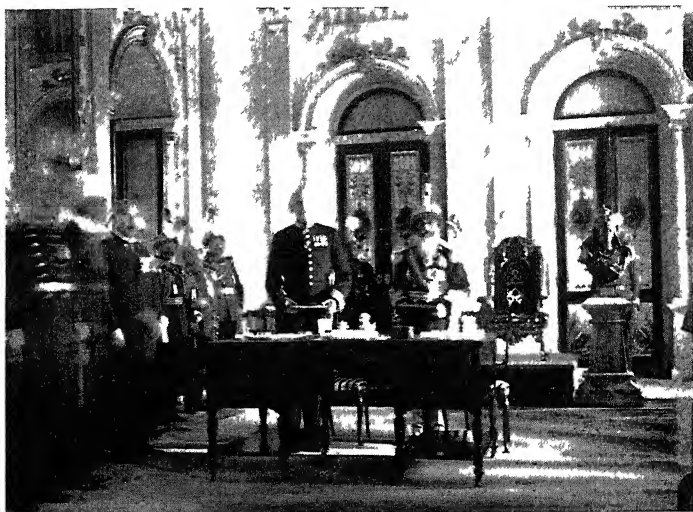
It is sad to have to mention here the death, in November 1929, of Maharaja Sir Chandra Sham Sher Jang. He was beyond question a wise and great ruler. He has left the stamp of his personality on every branch of the internal administration of the country, and he steered her with unerring skill in her foreign affairs. I have said little here regarding the internal reforms which were effected in Nepal during his term of office. Full details of these will be found in Landon's book already referred to. But I may mention, amongst others, his great measure for the abolition of the mild form of slavery which prevailed in the country; the improvements in communications—such as the light railway and the wire ropeway on the road to Katmandu, already mentioned; the building of hospitals, and many other social, judicial, and administrative reforms. In fact, Nepal, during the period of his tenure of the office of Prime Minister, has made notable advances in every branch of her administration, and may now be reckoned as amongst the most progressive and enlightened of the Asiatic countries.

Sir Chandra was succeeded by his brother, the Commander-in-Chief, Bhim Sham Sher Jang, a man of sterling character and high attainments. He was his brother's right-hand man in the administration for many years, and is fully capable of taking over the reins of office and of carrying on the traditions of efficiency and progress set by his great predecessor.

So I say farewell to the frontiers of India and the transfrontier countries. I spent an active, busy, and happy life there. I have tried to give some idea of the complexity of their problems and of the fascination of the



BRITISH LEGATION KATMANDU




EXCHANGE OF RATIFIED COPIES OF ANGLO NEPALESE TREATY AT  
KATMANDU, APRIL 1923

Author and Prime Minister standing each holding ratified copy of Treaty



life amongst these strange, out-of-the-way peoples and places. I fear that some of my narrative must be rather dull—long disquisitions on history and politics and so on—but I have always felt that one's own insignificant little adventures and experiences, however interesting to oneself, were merely incidental, and I have used them chiefly as an excuse for telling the story at all, and as a sample of the life which officers of the Indian Foreign Department may expect to lead on and beyond the Indian frontiers. At the time of writing the Indian problem is more difficult and complicated than ever, and there is scope for the exercise of all the talent and energy and force of character which 'our officers on the spot can supply; and we may congratulate ourselves on the possession of, at any rate, a few firm friends among our frontier neighbours.



## CHAPTER XVI

### SPORT

SPORT of all kinds—but especially big and small game shooting—has meant so much to me all my life, and has rendered endurable existence in such utterly god-forsaken places as, for instance, Seistan, that I should feel ungrateful if I did not devote to it a separate chapter.

It is not so much the mere killing of wild beasts and birds (although there is no use in being hypocritical and trying to blink the fact that when one goes out to shoot one wants to and means to kill something!) that gives charm and interest to sport, but the fact that shooting, especially, takes one out of the routine of everyday life and into the secret fastnesses of nature and the most wonderful scenery, whether mountain or forest, and lends a gilding of romance and excitement sometimes to the most prosaic, ugly, or even sordid surroundings. What sane man, for instance, would willingly tramp perseveringly backwards and forwards through endless muddy fields of turnips or wurzels in a biting east wind; or wade all day up to his knees almost in sticky mud, perspiring in every pore, through the hideously monotonous “paddy” fields of lower Bengal; or crouch for hours, half frozen, in the early hours of the morning on some bare Himalayan slope at an elevation of some 12,000 ft. or so; were it not for the strange fascination and glamour of shooting at some living bird or beast with gun or rifle?

Hunting is, I suppose, one of the most deeply rooted of our ancestral instincts, and the difference between a

Selous with his record of big game, ranging from elephants and rhinos downwards, and the small boy after tiddlers in the Serpentine lies in degree rather than in kind.

But whatever the reason for, or philosophy of sport may be, the fact remains that it has a fascination all its own, and that, especially for dwellers abroad, it makes life tolerable and even enjoyable in what might otherwise be almost intolerable conditions. For one thing, it is an outlet for a man's physical activity, and is the means of keeping him fit when organised games of any kind are unobtainable, and it saves him from boredom and stagnation in lonely stations where the amenities of life generally are few or non-existent. At any rate, I know that in my own case I owe a great deal of health and happiness to sport, and it has besides brought me into many queer, out-of-the-way corners of the world, where, but for this incentive, I should certainly never have penetrated.

One of my very first experiences was in the north of Sikkim where, after my little dash into Tibet, as described in Chapter I, I spent a week or two stalking burhel—a species of mountain sheep. There were, naturally, no professional shikaris in Sikkim, such as one finds in Kashmir to take the onus of first finding the game and then conducting the stalk, so I had to fend for myself, and I acquired in consequence no end of valuable experience of what to do and what not to do, and ten times more enjoyment and triumph when I made a successful stalk than if I had been bear-led all the time by a professional. My only companion was an old Bhutia poacher who lived in the village, and who knew the best places to find the burhel; and although I made a good many mistakes at first, and found it difficult to judge the size of a head, I certainly learnt the elements of the art of stalking, and bagged three or four quite good heads.

I used to sleep in a tiny *tente d'abri* near the shooting



ground, and sunrise would find me on some lofty ridge—perhaps 14,000 or 15,000 ft. high—to which I had climbed in the dark in order to be above some herd of burhel which we had spotted overnight, and whence the most glorious panorama opened out of the great snowy peaks and expanses by which we were surrounded. And I returned to my battery at Darjeeling in a condition of really perfect physical fitness.

My next trip took me into Kashmir, where I spent a week or two after ibex in a side nullah on the right bank of the Indus in Baltistan. On this occasion I was accompanied by the orthodox outfit of a Kashmiri professional shikari and his assistant, and I soon found that I was regarded by them much in the same way that a passenger is regarded by the officers of a liner—just so much human dunnage to be treated quite nicely but firmly, and taken from place to place without any say whatever in the navigation—and was neither expected nor allowed to have anything to do with the actual stalking. I was rather inclined, after my independent efforts in Sikkim, to resent this at first, but I soon found that my shikaris were past-masters of their art, and that it was best to follow the line of least resistance, learn all I could from them, and at any rate do my share by shooting straight when the decisive moment arrived and the rifle was put into my hands at the conclusion of the stalk. On these lines, as so many other young sportsmen have found in Kashmir, our partnership worked very well, and we had some good sport, but I cannot honestly say that I got the same amount of enjoyment and satisfaction out of it as I had had from my own unaided amateur efforts.

Later on, in the Gilgit District and on the Pamirs, I found what were, I think, the ideal conditions: namely, a first-class native hill-man, as keen-sighted as the Kashmiri and if anything a better man on the hill-side, with

whom one could co-operate in a friendly spirit—discussing with him every move in the game, and sharing with him the credit and satisfaction of a successful stalk.

Apropos of the sahibs' attitude towards their shikaris the natives, who have a keen sense of humour, used to produce a little dumb-show for our entertainment round the camp-fire at the yearly gathering of the clans at Gilgit. First a huge "ibex," decorated with a pair of real ibex horns, would make his appearance, and would proceed to graze unconcernedly within a few yards of the bonfire. Then the typical sahib, complete with topi, rifle, etc., and his shikari would be seen approaching from the opposite side of the arena. After a prolonged and painstaking search through a telescope the ibex would be espied, and gestures indicating surprise and delight at his great size would be exchanged. Then the pair would carefully stalk the ibex until within shooting distance (three yards!), and the sahib would take a careful aim and fire—bang! A miss! The ibex, startled by this untoward noise, would raise his head, gaze fearfully around, and canter off unwounded.

The sahib in his rage and disappointment administers a severe beating to the shikari!

End of Tableau I.

The second scene is similar, except that it ends in the death of the ibex, who falls upon his back, kicking wildly, whilst the gratified sahib transfers handfuls of coin to the beaming shikari.

This good-humoured little skit on the habits and manners of the sporting Englishman was always a star-turn, and was received with uproarious merriment by the onlookers.

So with such pleasant companions I spent many days and nights on the hill-sides after ibex, markhor, and red bear. Gilgit was then (and, for all I know, may be still) a wonderful shooting district—preserved by the Kashmir

Game Laws from exploitation, and forming practically a private reserve, during the winter months at any rate, for the handful of Britishers stationed there. Markhor provide an especially attractive form of hill-shooting. Unlike the ibex, who is always found on open ground above the forest line, the markhor frequents the pine-clad slopes at lower elevations up to 10,000 ft. or so. He generally lies up in cover during the daytime, and emerges towards sunset to graze on the open grassy slopes. I once spent a whole month after a fine beast in the famous Damot nullah on the right bank of the Indus, just opposite my little house at Bunji. He was a very cunning old fellow, and used to change his feeding-ground every few days, never emerging from his seclusion until half an hour or so before sunset, so it was almost impossible to stalk him. However, patience and perseverance earned their reward, and we got him at last. He was the last markhor I ever shot, as I left the district shortly afterwards, and became entangled in Tibetan affairs, and never returned there.

Markhor shooting, too, takes one into very difficult and even dangerous ground—the hill-sides of many of these nullahs in the Gilgit district being very steep and some of them almost precipitous—and one has to move carefully, especially in winter after a fresh fall of snow. Indeed, my friend and companion at Bunji, Captain Johnson of the Indian Army, was killed during my first winter in the district in a nullah in Chilas. He slipped and fell over a small precipice, fracturing his skull, and he died within a few hours.

I have already in Chapter I mentioned my little excursion after *ovis poli* on the Pamirs. Apart from the incentive of the sport the trip was a most interesting one. There is a special fascination about these great empty valleys on the "roof of the world," with their silence and remoteness and sense of space. It was drawing to-

wards winter on my last excursion across the passes of the Mustagh range and getting very cold at night. On this occasion we camped with some friendly Kirghiz, whom we encountered, sleeping in their "yurt"—the great dome-shaped, felt-covered tent, warm and comfortable as a house—and riding on their yaks in the early morning before sunrise to the foot of the hills where the poli were to be found.

I remember one morning, after fording a shallow stream on the yaks, the water on the long hair on their bellies froze into icicles and clattered as we moved along. Later, when we had left our yaks below and had climbed some hundreds of feet up the hill-side, the sun rose in the almost unearthly purity and clarity of that heavenly air, and we sat for a few minutes spying for poli and drinking in the incredible beauty of it all. There had been a slight sprinkling of snow during the night, and down below in the valleys we could see a good many wolves prowling about, singly and in small packs, trying to stalk the wily little marmots which were dotted about everywhere at the edges of their burrows, whistling shrill warnings to one another when any danger approached. There must have been hundreds in sight that morning. The very next day, as if by a concerted signal, or an agreed date, not one remained—they had all disappeared, to indulge in their comfortable winter sleep in their snug nests underground, not to emerge again till the following spring. What an enviable habit! Why should it be confined to marmots, dormice, and other hibernating mammals?

While writing this paragraph, I have been reminded of a favourite old book, a companion on many journeys, Andrew Wilson's "Abode of Snow," long-forgotten now, but a classic of its kind. He quotes some verses modelled from Mignon's song in "Wilhelm Meister," which have always stuck in my memory:

*Know'st thou the tent, its cone of snowy drill  
Pitched on the greensward by the snow-fed rill;  
Where whiter peaks than marble rise around,  
And icy ploughshares pierce the flower-clad ground?  
Know'st thou it well?*

*Oh there! Oh there!  
Where pipes the marmot—fiercely growls the bear!*

*Know'st thou the land where man scarce knows decay,  
So nigh the realms of everlasting day;  
Where gleam the splendours of unsullied truth;  
Where Durga smiles, and blooms eternal youth?  
Know'st thou it now?*

*Oh there! Oh there!  
To breathe the sweetness of that heavenly air!*

After leaving the Gilgit district I never did much big game shooting again (except for the trip in Northern Persia described in Chapter X) until I found myself in Nepal, during the latter years of my Indian career, but I indulged in plenty of small game in Persia and elsewhere. There was not much shooting of any kind in the part of Tibet where I was stationed (although some fine ovis ammon have been shot in the hills round Kamba Jong), but there was some excellent wild goose shooting to be had near Gyantse. We used to see the geese winging their way to the north in the spring and southwards in the autumn, flying in great wedge-shaped formations, high above us, even at that great elevation, and one of their halting-places in the autumn was at a small lake near our house. There we would wait, hidden by brushwood, and for half an hour or so just after sunset they would come in thick and fast, and we often bagged twenty or so of an evening. It is not often that one gets such a chance at wild geese, and it was great fun while it lasted.

But Seistan was the real paradise for wild fowl and black partridges. The former—ducks and geese of all kinds and descriptions—swarmed by thousands—I might almost say by millions—on the Hamun, but it was not very easy to get at them. There were two methods of procedure.

One was by means of an expedition on the reed rafts of the local watermen, the "Sayads" as they are termed. This is a strange aboriginal tribe found only in Seistan, who live in primitive huts on or near the shores of this inland sea, and who have made their livelihood for generations from its waters by fishing and snaring wild fowl, etc. Their means of locomotion consists of boat-shaped rafts made up of bundles of reeds which they punt about by long poles (see illustration facing p. 154), and which can carry three or four persons at a time. On these primitive but most efficient vessels we used to have ourselves propelled into the heart of the great expanse of reeds which exists in certain parts of the Hamun, and there in some patch of open water await the wild fowl which were kept moving by the beaters, and we would get fine shooting for an hour or two until the birds got scared and departed for quieter haunts elsewhere on the Hamun.

The other, and generally speaking the more productive, method of shooting wild fowl was originated, I believe, by my predecessor, Colonel R. L. Kennion, a great shikari who has written two fascinating books on eastern sport. The locale for these proceedings lay, not in the reedy portions of the Hamun, but on the great, bare, shallow expanses round about the edges which were covered by water to a depth of only a few inches. Here in a good season the wild fowl would assemble in incredible numbers and feed on the grasses, etc., which they could just reach with their bills below the surface. A row of two or three (depending on the number of guns) shallow pits

about the size of a barrel would be dug the day before the shoot some distance out—the water being kept out by a low rampart of mud round the edge of the pit.

On the appointed morning we would ride out to our shooting ground, and I shall never forget the thrill with which we used to hear the clamour of this great multitude of birds as they quacked and splashed and flew around in their thousands, half seen through the morning haze over the surface of the vast lake. About ten to eleven o'clock, when the sun was well up and the birds had more or less settled down for the day, we would wade out to the pits, an empty box would be put in for a seat, and a couple of tent-pegs driven into the side for our cartridge bags, and we would take our seats with our heads just below the level of the water. After the disturbance caused by our movements had subsided, our beaters (generally mounted on small local ponies) would make a line and start to drive from a distance of perhaps two or three miles, and in a few minutes the air would be thick with wild fowl. First would come the faster-flying duck—pintail, mallard, etc.—followed shortly by the slower geese, and finally by the teal, which, in contrast with the straight-flying duck and geese, would twist and twirl and swoop all around us.

On a still fine day the duck and geese, once alarmed by the first shot, would rise high into the air, and we would only get an occasional bird within range; but we always tried to select wild windy weather for our shoots, and then the birds would fly low within easy shot—the geese especially passing sometimes only a few feet above our heads—and we would keep loading and firing as fast as we could for perhaps half an hour or more continuously until our guns were almost too hot to hold.

Presently the beaters would come up and proceed to gather in the spoils, and we would wade ashore and have lunch; and in the afternoon the performance would be repeated, the beaters working from the opposite direction.

And besides these organised beats we would get flighting birds almost every evening on some spit of land or behind some hillock where we knew that the duck and teal passed on their way to their night feeding-grounds.

Then there were the black partridges—jolly little birds, not quite so fast as an English partridge perhaps, but affording very good sport and eating. We used to get them either in the so-called “gardens” in the cultivated areas of Seistan or amongst the tamarisk bushes in the wilder uncultivated parts. The best cover was in the vineyards—small enclosures of a quarter of an acre or so, ridged and furrowed, the leafless vines and the briars forming excellent cover. Here we would walk them up, and a small enclosure like this would sometimes produce ten or fifteen brace. Or if there was an encircling wall we would have the birds driven over whilst we stood outside.

In the tamarisk we always had them driven, and Colonel Hunter and I have more than once bagged over fifty brace in a day—really nice shooting.

During the winter which I spent at Meshad, in Khorasan, I made a little expedition into the hilly forest country beyond Bujnurd, as described in Chapter VIII, where my chief objective was the “maral” stag. I went in the autumn when the stags were calling, as at any other time it would be practically impossible to find them in these dense forests; and I did very well, securing three or four fine heads. Colonel Kennion had shot a good specimen of the local tiger the year before; but although I saw their tracks everywhere, and my orderly surprised a fine tigress sitting on a rock near the camp one morning, I was not lucky enough to shoot one. But the forest and adjoining hill-sides were full of other smaller game, and I had plenty of mixed shooting, and altogether enjoyed a delightful fortnight in this little-known country.

And there was plenty of small game shooting round



about Meshad itself—duck, snipe, sand-grouse, and the lesser bustard. These latter were plentiful, and could be seen moving about on the ground in large packs of twenty or more, but they were exceedingly difficult, almost impossible, to stalk. The only way we could get them was by concealing ourselves in a ditch or behind some brush-wood and having them driven towards us. Nine times out of ten they went wide, but every now and then we were rewarded by their flying over us, and we bagged a good few in the course of the season. They were fine big birds, about the size of a turkey and excellent eating, and made a satisfactory right and left when we could bring it off. And the days spent riding and walking about on these great open uplands at this season of the year were most enjoyable, and made up for the rather enervating heat and dullness of the summer months.

The next scene lies at or near Shiraz, in the province of Fars. Here we had duck, snipe, and my old friends the chikor (hill partridges), which I had not seen since the Gilgit days. One might occasionally make big bags of duck if one struck the right place on the right day, and I once shot over a hundred head, standing almost up to my waist in water amongst reeds in a lake on the Dasht Arjin plain. But the best sport was the chikor shooting on the hills, where we walked hard after these active and wary birds, climbing up and down steep hill-sides all day long and seldom getting a really easy shot. Splendid exercise and fine shooting. I have already described how I sometimes shot with my nomad friends on horse-back.

Then followed the five years interlude of the war, during which I scarcely fired a shot, and the next opportunity for sport occurred during my term of office in Nepal. Here, of course, tiger-shooting was the main attraction. Most people who visit India would like to have the chance of shooting a tiger, and in the fulfilment

of this laudable ambition I endeavoured to gratify as many of my friends as possible. It will be understood that we owed these wonderful pageants to the kindness and hospitality of the Prime Minister of Nepal, who placed the State elephants and all necessary staff at our disposal, granted us the necessary facilities for the provision of supplies for men and beasts in the heart of the jungle, and gave us the free run of his best preserves. In such circumstances, as will have been gathered from the brief description in the two preceding chapters, our shoots were conducted on a scale of real Oriental magnificence—scores of elephants and hundreds of camp followers and assistants being provided, the *mise en scène* consisting of practically limitless forests swarming with wild beasts.

A more detailed account of the *modus operandi* may be of interest. Some weeks before the date fixed for the shoot, experienced trackers and shikaris would visit the district proposed for the camp, and would locate the area or areas where tiger tracks most abounded, or where the inhabitants of the scattered villages reported heavy losses amongst their cattle; and on this information a suitable site would be selected for the camp, and by the appointed date the camp would be pitched, and the elephants, supplies, etc., assembled ready for the arrival of the guests. Meanwhile, several small parties, consisting each of a couple of shikaris with an elephant, would take up their stations in the forest within a radius of four or five miles of the central camp, and a day or two before the guests were due to arrive they would tie up a number of young water-buffaloes in spots known to be most frequented by tigers. Buffaloes were selected for this purpose as being numerous and cheap, and also because Nepal, being a Hindu country, religious sentiment forbade the use of cattle for such a purpose. The selected spots were generally open spaces near the bank of a stream or sandy river-bed, with water on one side and thick jungle on

the other; and the buffaloes were secured to stout stakes by a rope strong enough to hold them, but not too strong to be broken by the tiger. Every morning soon after daybreak the outlying scouts would go the round of the victims, and immediately on discovering a kill would ride into camp with the "khabbar."

The tiger's share in the proceedings followed an almost invariable code. After killing, he would snap the rope and carry or drag the carcass into the nearest thicket—generally within a few hundred yards of the stake—would eat his fill, then stroll down to the water for a drink, and return to the carcass, close to which he would lie and sleep all day until ready for a second meal in the evening. It was easy to see where he had taken his kill by the broad trail left through the brushwood, and sometimes his exact whereabouts would be intimated by a few crows or vultures perched on tree tops round about, awaiting their opportunity for a share in the feast.

The great moment of the day was the arrival of the news in camp. It usually came about eight to nine o'clock, depending on the number and location of the kills of the particular scout, and on his distance from the main camp, which might sometimes be as much as ten miles or so. We would have finished breakfast and be strolling idly about the camp, wondering what the news would be, and whether we should be destined to a blank day or not. Presently, in the distance, two familiar figures would be seen approaching our mess tent—the Subadar and the Jemadar—the Native Officers of the Envoy's escort, keen sportsmen both, who would await the arrival of the messengers from each of the outposts, and would hear and collate their reports.

The approach of these two Officers would be watched with anxious eyes: what message were they bringing us—good or bad? Sometimes (but very rarely) their countenances would be overcast, and their mien depressed,



AUTHOR AND KIBNO'S IN AD



ROSAHUND TADY RIDLEY WITH SKIN OF ELK HIGER  
(1011 5 IN)



and we would augur the worst. But more frequently—say nine times out of ten—we would discern a jaunty bearing and a beaming look; and indeed, we used to say that we could divine the number of the “kills” by the breadth of their smiles as they came along. Anyone who has seen Commander Dyott’s fine film “Tiger Hunting in India,” the latter part of which was filmed at a shoot in Nepal in 1922, will recollect the appearance of these two fine fellows and their animated description to me (in dumb show of course—we have not yet had a “talkie” of a tiger shoot) of the size and whereabouts of the tiger.

Putting aside those rare blank days when there was nothing to report, we would generally have news of at least one kill and sometimes two or even more; and there was one wonderful morning when news came in from our various outlying posts of no less than eleven kills, in which eighteen tigers (including some cubs) were involved

Arrangements are then made for the day. First the main body of the elephants, including the howdahs, would move ponderously off in single file towards the nearest kill, led by the scout who had brought the news. After an interval of half an hour or so the guests would mount on to their pad elephants (a pad is a huge mattress thrown across the elephant’s back, and fastened on by a stout rope, upon which one can ride either side-saddle or astride), selected for their fleetness of foot, and the main body would be caught up in about half a mile or so from where the tiger was supposed to be lying.

The guns now transfer themselves from their pads to their howdahs, where each man’s orderly is ready awaiting him with his fire-arms and ammunition. All being ready, the serious business of the day—the ringing of the tiger—begins. The elephants again move off in single file, the howdahs dotted at intervals here and there, and from this moment until the ring is complete strict silence

is preserved and everything is done as quietly as possible. When within a few hundred yards of the tiger's lair, the senior Native Officer, the Subadar, takes his stand on one side, and silently signals to each mahout as he passes to turn alternately right or left, and thus the long column is broken into two sections proceeding in opposite directions. The leading mahout of each section guides his elephant in a long semi-circle, one curving to the right, the other to the left, until after perhaps half an hour to an hour's slow progress through the jungle, the two meet.

The elephants are now ranged in a complete circle with the patch of jungle supposed to contain the tiger and his kill in the centre. The ring at this stage is still a very large and loose one with the elephants separated from one another by intervals of 50 to 100 yards or so. Silence is still preserved, but one shrill whistle announces the completion of the ring, and on this signal all the elephants turn inwards and move towards the centre, gradually contracting the size of the ring and approaching closer and closer to one another. As the distance diminishes, and the ring becomes more compact, the precautions hitherto observed are relaxed—shouts and orders are heard, and the crashing of undergrowth and small trees as the great beasts force their way through the forest, whilst the guns on their howdahs keep on the alert in case the tiger should make a premature attempt to break the ring before it is properly formed.

This, however, rarely occurs. As a general rule the tiger, gorged, lazy, and sleepy after a full meal, does not bother his head over a few shouts, and the, to him, well-known sound of elephants moving through the jungle. It is only when it is too late that he realises that it is a concerted business and that he is in a trap. He may then slink about a little to and fro, trying to find a loop-hole for escape, but seeing that he is entirely surrounded he will finally crouch in the thickest patch of jungle he

can find in the ring, and lie sulkily there awaiting the dénouement.

By this time the ring is complete—a compact circle some 80 to 100 yards in diameter, the elephants almost touching one another—everybody on the *qui vive*—the shooters with their rifles ready, the headmen and native officers shouting directions and warnings, and the mahouts and lesser fry jabbering and exchanging facetious remarks.

The order is now given to clear a space round the whole circumference of the ring, whereupon every mahout instructs his elephant to trample and break down the undergrowth and smaller trees in front of him. For perhaps half an hour or more, depending on the nature of the jungle, this process of destruction continues—the elephants trampling, turning, pushing down small trees and breaking branches, and pulling up grass, reeds and saplings by the roots, and the mahouts chopping off the lower branches of the bigger trees with their kukris—until the former impenetrable thicket for a depth of some 10 to 15 yards all round the ring has been replaced by a comparatively open circle, carpeted with a debris of crushed grasses and tangled branches.

The ring is now reformed—all the elephants facing inwards on the outer circumference of the clearing, and the two Native Officers, with the solemn mien and steadfast regard of commanders on the eve of a critical engagement, move gravely hither and thither making their final dispositions—ordering the crushing of some still too prominent briars, or the lopping of some leafy branch, and posting the howdah elephants at the best strategic points.

The decisive moment has now arrived. Up to this point, unless the tiger has actually been seen during the course of the proceedings, it is impossible to say for certain whether or no he is really in the ring. He may



have slipped away unperceived, or he may possibly have cleared off elsewhere after his meal. This is unusual, but it has not infrequently occurred, especially in the case of tigers who have already been ringed and have been lucky enough to make their escape.

However, the test will now be put. A particularly large, stolid, and courageous tusker, with a trustworthy mahout on his neck, and an almost naked assistant perched over his tail and hanging on by a rope, advances majestically into the ring and proceeds to quarter its still unexplored area, up and down, to and fro, round and round. There is dead silence in the surrounding throng. Every eye is fixed on the great beast in his nonchalant progress. Every shooter in his howdah has his rifle firmly grasped at the ready, whilst his orderly behind him holds a second weapon in reserve.

Suddenly the tusker gives vent to a sharp grunt, and backs violently and perhaps turns and runs a few yards. The expectation and excitement quicken—it looks as if the tiger was there, but it may only be the sight of the carcass or the scent of the tiger still lingering which has scared the wily and cautious old elephant who, in spite of his apparently *dégagé* air, knows perfectly well what is up, and who has no intention of being caught napping. So his leisurely march is resumed in another quarter of the ring, and after a few minutes he again approaches the danger zone. This time there can be no mistake—there is a fierce roar, the tusker turns tail and scuttles to the other side of the ring—and a deafening yell of “bagh! bagh!” (tiger! tiger!) breaks from the throat of every onlooker.

It is a great moment—well worth living for. We all know that within a few yards of us is a specimen of the most savage of wild animals, cornered and desperate, exasperated by the long waiting and the noise and the knowledge that he is hemmed in by enemies, and deter-

mined to fight for his life to the last gasp. I have been in at the death of some 150 tigers, but that first cry of "bagh!" never failed to give me that genuine thrill down the spine which one experiences now and then during the course of one's life.

Once certain that the tiger is there everyone settles down seriously to the business of the day. The course of the proceedings varies in every case, and cannot be exactly foretold. Sometimes the tiger will break cover immediately on being discovered, will charge or run round the ring, and may be bowled over at the very first shot. More frequently he sulks and remains under cover, snarling and growling, whenever the beating elephant approaches him, and occasionally making a rush at this devoted beast, and pursuing him to the edge of his sanctuary, biting at his heels, and jumping on to his rump and clawing him.\* Sometimes other big elephants have to be sent to the assistance of the first one, and it may take an hour or two of persistent badgering before the tiger can be forced to show himself in an open space where the guns can get a shot at him.

Sometimes it happens, too, that there is found to be more than one tiger in the ring, and then of course the excitement is intensified. I have often known two, and sometimes three, and twice four tigers to be in the same ring together—generally, but not always, a tigress with cubs, large or small. The end in all these cases is the same. After a longer or shorter period of sulking, the tiger is forced to show himself in the cleared portion of the ring, and is killed or wounded by one or other of the shooters from the howdahs. In the case of several shots being fired the tiger is awarded to the person who gets in the first shot, however trivial the wound may be; and this is not always an easy matter to decide.

It will, of course, sometimes occur that a determined tiger will make a bolt right away, and, undeterred by

clamour, shots, and sticks, etc., thrown at him, will slip between two elephants and make off into the jungle. But even so, he rarely escapes. The Nepalese shikaris from long practice have developed the technique of overhauling a fugitive tiger into a fine art. The moment he is seen to have broken through, the ring automatically divides into two parts, and two long parallel columns of elephants go scurrying away after him; after a head-long rush of a mile or so through the jungle, the heads of the columns converge and meet, a halt is called, and the whole process of ringing is again gone through, with the result that in nine cases out of ten the tiger is found to have been trapped a second time. The fact is, of course, that the tiger is gorged after his heavy meal of the night before, and is too heavy and too lazy to run either far or fast, and can therefore be overtaken and surrounded by the fleeter elephants. But as may be imagined, the manœuvre calls for consummate woodcraft on the part of the shikaris, and the perfect understanding and instant co-operation of every mahout.

Once ringed, in fact, it a very rare event for a tiger to escape altogether.

During the course of a season's shooting every variety of jungle will be encountered. Sometimes the ring will be formed on the banks of a stream—one half of it stationed amongst the "sal" jungle on the bank, the other half on the sandy grass-grown river-bed below. Sometimes the tiger will have taken refuge in a dense thorn thicket—utterly impenetrable to man or to any animal less massive than an elephant. In such cases the task of forming the ring and of breaking down an open space as described above is one of incredible difficulty, and may take almost a whole day of continual labour on the part of the elephants, who naturally dislike having to tackle masses of tangled thorns and briers. And even when all this has been accomplished, the question of driving



*Round the World Travel Pictures*

# A GOOD DAY'S WORK

*Left to right* Crouching—Mr and Mrs William J Morden Author Col J B Dalzell-Hunter I M S Standing—Jemadar Capt Harvey Subadar of Envoy's escort



LORD LYTTON, WITH HIS SON JOHN



the tiger out of cover still remains, and the beating elephant, or elephants, find it a herculean task to force their way through the thicket. And in such circumstances, the tiger, knowing well how difficult it is for his pursuers to spot him, will lie "doggo" for hours in some small patch without a movement to betray his presence. I have known cases where the ring has gradually closed into a circle only a few yards in diameter before we could tell for certain whether he was there or not; and it was only at the very last moment, when some elephant was almost stepping on him, that he was at last forced to disclose himself—probably by a furious spring at an elephant's head.

But strangely enough the most difficult terrain to carry out the ringing system successfully is in the treeless grass plains which are often found near the banks of the big rivers soon after they emerge from the hills. Here the grass, though only some 4 to 6 ft. in height, makes excellent cover for a tiger—dense enough to hide him, but not too thick to hamper his freedom of movement; and it is next to impossible to trample it down, as it is tough and wiry, and springs up again after being trodden on. Consequently, the tiger can rush about without being seen, except for occasional glimpses of his back as he bounds along, and it is easy for him to break the ring, and difficult to find him again when once he has done so. I have had some amusing experiences in such country, when there were three or four tigers on foot simultaneously—the ring dissolving itself into separate groups—the shooters pursuing different tigers through the grass, and potting at them as if they were rabbits.

It might be imagined that all this was most dangerous, and that accidents must constantly occur from flying bullets fired off the backs of elephants—often in motion, and at times plunging wildly—from the circumference of a ring less than 100 yards across, and with scores of

men and elephants all around. But, as a matter of fact, it is not so risky as it seems. The shooters, to begin with, are standing on the backs of elephants 10 ft. or so above ground-level, and are of course always shooting downwards; and as their range of vision is limited to a few yards in front and on each side of them, they can only see the tiger when he is right below them, and they have to aim almost vertically downwards—so there are no long shots, and very little chance of a *nicochet*, except occasionally off the trunk or branch of a tree.

Tigers, too, vary very much. Some are sluggish and cowardly, and succumb without much show of fight. But the majority are ferocious and daring, and will attack the beating elephant again and again before they break cover—leaping on to him, and biting and tearing him with their claws, until he refuses to carry on at all, and has to be reinforced or changed. And such a tiger, when he does break cover, will charge full tilt at the ring, and spring right up on the head of the nearest elephant—large or small—and cling on until shaken off. If it happens to be a *howdah* elephant it is possible for the sportsman to shoot the tiger by leaning over the front of his *howdah*, taking good care not to be shaken out by the elephant's jerks and struggles, but otherwise it is too dangerous to try and shoot a tiger in this position.

I remember once a big tiger springing on to the head of a very small elephant which had been brought into the ring for instructional purposes, driven by a young *mahout*—a boy of thirteen or fourteen. The lad leant over and beat the tiger with his driving stick, cursing him freely all the time in fluent Nepalese. When finally the tiger dropped off and was shot a ring of *mahouts* surrounded the young hero, praising and chaffing him, and I heard one of them say to him, "Why, *Nathu*, when I saw you leaning over and looking into the tiger's face I thought you were going to kiss him!"

They certainly are a cheery, jolly crew, these Nepalese mahouts and shikaris—past-masters of their profession, as keen as mustard, and utterly fearless. It is really a sight worth seeing when the big tusker marches into a ring with the deliberate intention of routing out a full-grown tiger from thick jungle. The mahout is fairly safe, seated behind the enormous skull and ears; but the assistant, perched precariously on the elephant's rump, and armed only with a nail-studded club about 18 ins. long (the humane little weapon with which he beats the elephant on the sore place over the root of his tail when he wants him to go faster!) does not occupy a very enviable position, and I think that most insurance companies would require a substantial premium on his life policy. But he does not seem to mind a bit—it is all in the day's work; and if the tiger does happen to jump up at or near him he beats a temporary retreat to another part of the broad back.

I am afraid that I have dilated at rather excessive length on this particular aspect of sport, but the fact is that so many sportsmen have recorded their experiences of hunting markhor, ibex, ovis poli, etc., that there is not much that is new to be said about big or small game shooting. So I have touched only lightly on all the more familiar aspects of the subject. But tiger-shooting, as it is practised in Nepal, is unique, and has never, as far as I know, been attempted on these lines in any other country, nor have many sportsmen had the opportunity of witnessing it; and I have therefore devoted the greater part of this chapter to its description. And, besides, this particular sport possesses a special interest in that it has been shared in by three generations of our Royal Family—King Edward, King George, and the Prince of Wales.

In Appendices C and D will be found a detailed list of the game shot by the Prince of Wales and his staff during their visit to Nepal, and also a résumé of my bags during



my period of service in that country. I, personally, cannot claim to have shot many tigers—I enjoyed the jungle life and the excitement and interest of the sport, and had no desire to amass trophies or to create records; but I did appreciate the opportunity of enabling a good many of my friends (amongst them some ladies and one boy of twelve) to shoot a tiger, and to visit the mysterious Kingdom of Nepal.

And regarding the number of tigers shot, it should be borne in mind that they swarm in these jungles, and that they levy a heavy toll on the peasants' cattle. It is reckoned that a tiger, or tigress, will kill on an average two or three times a week, so, taking an average of one hundred beasts per year per tiger, the 150 tigers shot during my shooting parties meant a saving of some 15,000 cattle (or water buffaloes) per annum! Some jungle beasts—deer, pigs, etc.—would no doubt have figured among this slaughter, but the bulk would consist of domestic animals. And there were besides a few man-killers among these tigers—one in particular was known to have killed eleven men and women out of one village alone. So I experienced no qualms of conscience regarding the number killed.

I have spared my readers as much detail as possible in this chapter on Sport regarding actual stalks, record measurements, etc., etc. If I once embarked on such details, and set out to give a full account of my various travels and sporting adventures, I would require a book rather than a chapter. But all this has already been done in so many excellent works of sport and travel, that it seems superfluous to add to their number, and all I have tried to do is to present a general idea of the sort of sport which is available in these outlying stations for a man who is keen on shooting, and likes camp life, and does not mind roughing it a bit now and then.

## APPENDIX A

LETTER HANDED TO THE AUTHOR BY THE MESSENGER  
FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE AT SHIRAZ ON  
THE 10TH NOVEMBER, 1915

*Mercredi, le 10 novembre 1915.*

MONSIEUR LE CONSUL,—

Le Comité soussigné a l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance :

L'arrestation provisoire de vous et de la colonie anglaise a été décidée par les patriotes persans. Une demie-heure, à compter de la remise de cette lettre, vous est accordée pour prendre votre décision. Si vous vous rendez prisonnier avec la colonie, vous serez envoyé à Borasdjan et y serez retenu pour être échangé contre les persans et allemands qui ont été fait prisonniers par vos compatriotes sur territoire neutre persan. Quant aux femmes, elles peuvent, selon leur volonté, rester en toute sécurité à Chiraze, ou vous accompagner à Borasdjan, d'où elles seront immédiatement envoyées sous escorte à Bouchire. La propriété personnelle et privée ici sera scellée et gardée, de même que le consulat.

Si après trente minutes—vous aurez l'obligeance de signer l'heure et la minute de l'arrivée de cette lettre sur son enveloppe—vous ne vous rendez pas, le consulat anglais et les maisons anglaises seront bombardées et le comité décline expressément la responsabilité de toutes les conséquences qui pourraient résulter de votre refus pour vos ressortissants et spécialement pour les femmes.

Aussitôt que vous vous aurez constitué prisonniers, vos maisons seront occupées et on vous accordera trois heures pour préparer votre départ. Trois mulets pour chaque

Européen ou Européenne sont tenu à votre disposition, chacun de vous peut se faire accompagner par un domestique.

Nous ajoutons que l'installation télégraphique doit nous être remise intacte, faute de quoi nous tiendrons le directeur Mr. Smith personnellement responsable.

LE COMITÉ NATIONAL POUR LA PROTECTION  
DE L'INDÉPENDANCE PERSANE.

## APPENDIX B

### TEXT OF TREATY OF 1923 BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND NEPAL

WHEREAS peace and friendship have now existed between the British Government and the Government of Nepal since the signing of the Treaty of Segowlie on the 2nd day of December 1815; and whereas since that date the Government of Nepal has ever displayed its true friendship for the British Government and the British Government has as constantly shown its good-will towards the Government of Nepal; and whereas the Governments of both the countries are now desirous of still further strengthening and cementing the good relations and friendship which have subsisted between them for more than a century; the two High Contracting Parties having resolved to conclude a new Treaty of Friendship have agreed upon the following Articles:

*Article I.*—There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Governments of Great Britain and Nepal, and the two Governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect each other's independence, both internal and external.

*Article II.*—All previous treaties, agreements and engagements, since and including the Treaty of Segowlie of 1815, which have been concluded between the two Governments are hereby confirmed, except so far as they may be altered by the present Treaty.

*Article III.*—As the preservation of peace and friendly relations with the neighbouring States whose territories adjoin their common frontiers is to the

mutual interests of both the High Contracting Parties, they hereby agree to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with those States likely to rupture such friendly relations, and each to exert its good offices as far as may be possible to remove such friction and misunderstanding.

*Article IV.*—Each of the High Contracting Parties will use all such measures as it may deem practicable to prevent its territories being used for purposes inimical to the security of the other.

*Article V.*—In view of the long standing friendship that has subsisted between the British Government and the Government of Nepal and for the sake of cordial neighbourly relations between them, the British Government agrees that the Nepal Government shall be free to import from or through British India into Nepal whatever arms, ammunition, machinery, warlike material or stores may be required or desired for the strength and welfare of Nepal, and that this arrangement shall hold good for all time as long as the British Government is satisfied that the intentions of the Nepal Government are friendly and that there is no immediate danger to India from such importations. The Nepal Government, on the other hand, agrees that there shall be no export of such arms, ammunition, etc., across the frontier of Nepal either by the Nepal Government or by private individuals.

If, however, any Convention for the regulation of the Arms Traffic, to which the British Government may be a party, shall come into force, the right of importation of arms and ammunition by the Nepal Government shall be subject to the proviso that the Nepal Government shall first become a party to that Convention, and that such importation shall only be made in accordance with the provisions of that Convention.

*Article VI.*—No Customs duty shall be levied at British Indian ports on goods imported on behalf of the Nepal Government for immediate transport to that country provided that a certificate from such authority as may from time to time be determined by the two Governments shall be presented at the time of importation to the Chief Customs Officer at the port of import setting forth that the goods are the property of the Nepal Government, are required for the public services of the Nepal Government, are not for the purpose of any State monopoly or State trade, and are being sent to Nepal under orders of the Nepal Government.

The British Government also agrees to the grant in respect of all trade goods, imported at British Indian ports for immediate transmission to Katmandu without breaking bulk *en route*, of a rebate of the full duty paid, provided that in accordance with arrangements already agreed to between the two Governments, such goods may break bulk for repacking at the port of entry under Customs supervision in accordance with such rules as may from time to time be laid down in this behalf. The rebate may be claimed on the authority of a certificate signed by the said authority that the goods have arrived at Katmandu with the Customs seals unbroken and otherwise untampered with.

*Article VII.*—This Treaty signed on the part of the British Government by Lieutenant-Colonel W. F. T. O'Connor, C.I.E., C.V.O., British Envoy at the Court of Nepal, and on the part of the Nepal Government by General His Highness Maharaja Sir Chandra Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., D.C.L., Thong-lin Pimma-Kokang-Wang-Syan, Prime Minister and Marshal of Nepal, shall be ratified and the ratification shall be exchanged at Katmandu as soon as practicable.

Signed and sealed at Katmandu this the twenty-first day of December in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three Anno Domini, corresponding with the sixth Paush, Sambat Era one thousand nine hundred and eighty.

(Sd.) W. F. T. O'CONNOR, *Lt.-Col.*,

*British Envoy at the Court of Nepal.*

(Sd.) (Under Vernacular translation of Treaty).

CHANDRA SHUM SHERE,

*Prime Minister and Marshal of Nepal.*

#### APPENDIX

*Letter from His Highness the Prime Minister of Nepal to the British Envoy at the Court of Nepal dated the 21st December 1923. (Referring to Article V and undertaking before the importation of arms and munitions at Indian ports to furnish him with a detailed list of the same.)*

Regarding the purchase of arms and munitions which the Government of Nepal buys from time to time for the strength and welfare of Nepal, and imports to its own territory from and through British India in accordance with Article V of the Treaty between the two Governments, the Government of Nepal hereby agrees that it will, from time to time before the importation of arms and munitions at British Indian ports, furnish detailed lists of such arms and munitions to the British Envoy at the Court of Nepal in order that the British Government may be in a position to issue instructions to the port authorities to afford the necessary facilities for their importation in accordance with Article VI of this Treaty.

## APPENDIX C

### GAME RECORD OF THE ROYAL SHOOT IN NEPAL

*14th to 21st December, 1921*

#### TIGER

<i>Date</i>	<i>Total Length</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Shot by</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
	<i>ft. ins.</i>			
14th Dec. .	9 3	Male	H.R.H. the Prince of Wales	—
" " .	9 8	"	Capt. E. D. Metcalfe	—
" " .	7 9	Female	Capt. Poynder	—
" " .	8 4	"	Capt. Dudley North	—
15th " .	7 10	"	Sir Godfrey Thomas	—
16th " .	9 7	"	Lord Louis Mountbatten	—
" " .	8 9	"	Vice-Admiral Sir Lionel Halsey	—
" " .	8 2	"	Sir Godfrey Thomas	—
17th " .	5 4	Male cub	Com. Newport	—
" " .	4 11½	Cub	Col. Worgan	—
" " .	9 2	Male	Hon. Bruce Ogilvy	—
19th " .	7 7	Female	Hon. Piers Legh	—
" " .	9 10	Male	Earl of Cromer	Largest tiger obtained during the shoots
" " .	7 10	Female	Capt. E. Villiers	—
" " .	4 3	Cub	Hon. Piers Legh	—
21st " .	7 4	Female	Sir Godfrey Thomas	—
" " .	9 2	Male	H. A. F. Metcalfe, Esq.	—

In addition to the seventeen tigers shot a cub was taken alive and was included in the collection of live animals presented to H.R.H. by the Maharaja of Nepal.



## RHINOCEROS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Shot by</i>	<i>Sex</i>
16th Dec.	Capt. Dudley North . . .	Female
17th „	Capt. Poynder . . .	„
19th „	H.R.H. the Prince of Wales .	Male
„ „	Com. Newport . . .	„
„ „	Perceval Landon, Esq. . .	„
20th „	Lord Louis Mountbatten . .	„
„ „	Hon. Bruce Ogilvy . . .	Female
„ „	Lord Cromer . . .	„

Two rhinos, wounded by H.R.H. and Capt. Dudley North respectively, were subsequently picked up dead by the Nepalese after the shoots were over.

## LEOPARDS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Shot by</i>	<i>Length</i> <i>ft. ins.</i>
19th Dec.	Lord Cromer . . .	6 2
20th „	Sir G. de Montmorency . .	6 7

## BEARS

<i>Date</i>	<i>Shot by</i>	<i>Length</i> <i>ft. ins.</i>
19th Dec.	—	5 0
20th „	Capt. Poynder . . .	4 11½

*Totals*

Tigers . . .	17
Rhinos . . .	10
Leopards . . .	2
Bears . . .	2
Hamadryad . . .	1—10 ft. 3 ins.

## APPENDIX D

### SUMMARY OF BIG GAME SHOT IN NEPAL IN FOUR SEASONS

	<i>Tigers</i>	<i>Leopards</i>	<i>Rhinos</i>	<i>Bears</i>	<i>Buffaloes</i>	<i>Total</i>
Season 1918-19 .	18	5	1	—	—	24
„ 1921-22 .	46	2	13	3	1	65
„ 1922-23 .	18	3	—	—	—	21
„ 1923-24 .	38	1	5	2	—	46
„ 1924-25 .	38	3	1	4	2	48
Totals	158	14	20	9	3	204

55 measured tigers averaged 9 ft. 8 ins. (excluding any under 9 ft.).

36 measured tigresses averaged 8 ft. 8 ins. (excluding any under 8 ft.).

Biggest tiger: 10 ft 5 ins

(All measurements taken along the curves from tip of nose to end of tail)

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